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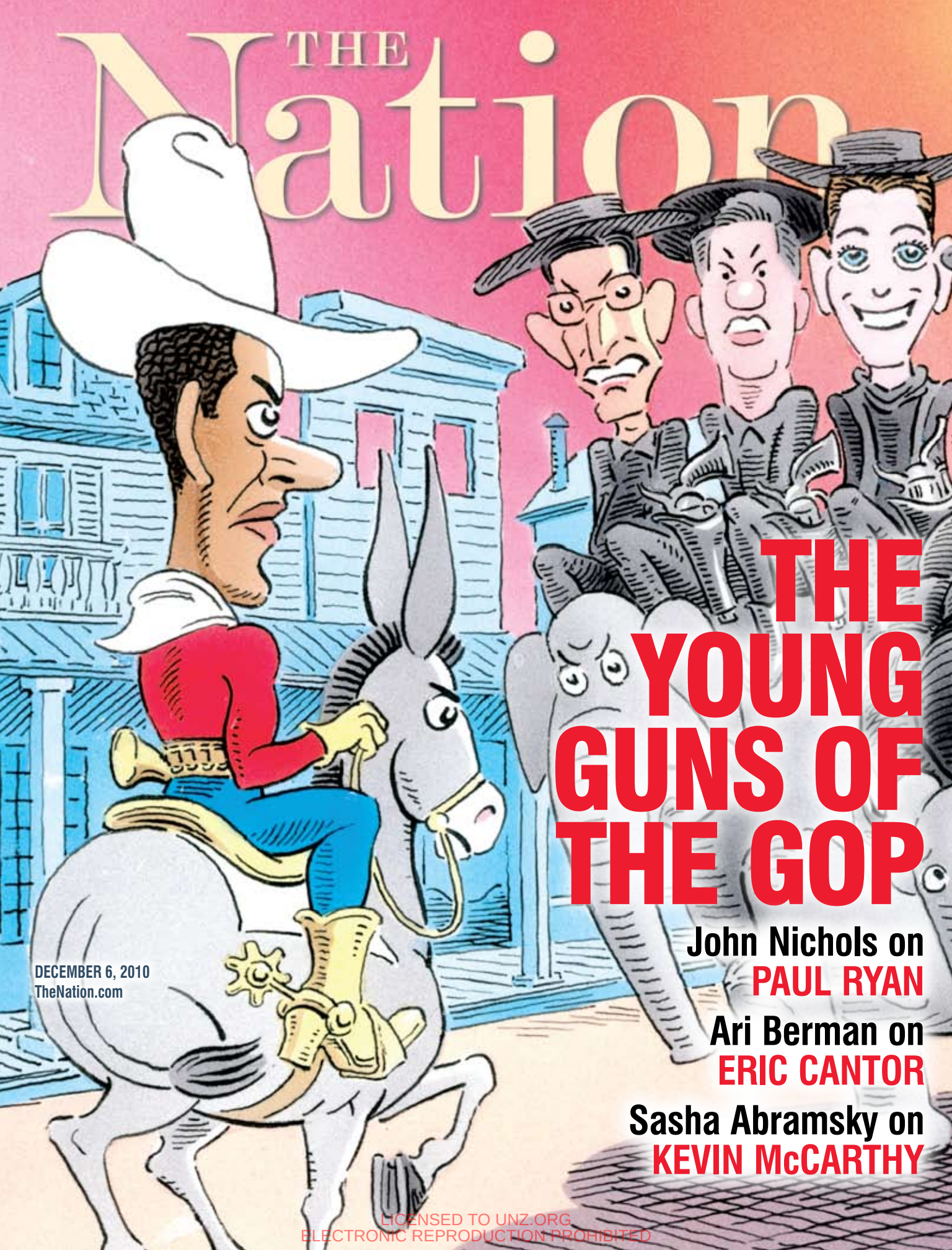

THE YOUNG GUNS OF THE GOP

John Nichols on PAUL RYAN

Ari Berman on ERIC CANTOR

Sasha Abramsky on KEVIN McCARTHY

DECEMBER 6, 2010
TheNation.com

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Letters

Election by Sewage United

Thousand Oaks, Calif.

Re "Democracy for Sale" [Nov. 1]: Looks like we've had one of those "fair and balanced" elections, with a stream of corporate cash (sewage) funding right-wing candidates and flooding the media with one message: gummint is bad. Of course, corporations want government off their backs, and now they can sink as much sewage as they want into elections, thanks to *Citizens United*. It was a brilliant plan by Rove & Co. The left, satisfied with an Obama win in 2008, rested on its laurels and wasn't paying attention. It seems Rove & Co. gave up a real fight in 2008 and got to work on 2010, funneling all sorts of sewage into creating front groups for corporations, and that bogus grassroots movement, the Tea Party.

Nathan Carlson

Hebron's History

Portland, Ore.

It saddens and surprises me that a *Nation* editor has failed to provide the proper context for an important story. In "Postcard From Palestine" [Nov. 1], Christopher Hayes states, "In 1929 Arab rioters killed sixty-seven of the small number of Jewish residents of the city (several hundred were saved by their Arab neighbors, who hid them in their homes), and the last Jewish resident left the city in 1948." Hayes, like most people, fails to recognize that the massacre in Hebron in 1929 was part of regionwide riots between Arabs and Jews that began several days earlier in Jerusalem. Hayes would have us assume that Palestinian Arabs killed Hebron Jews for… why? A fit of racist ethnic cleansing?

The bloody riots in Jerusalem started after Zionists there paraded nationalist banners at the Wailing Wall in a brazen provocation against Ottoman-era bans of such displays, in force for many years. These and other Zionist actions at the Wailing Wall (at the time owned and maintained by Arabs) were designed to provoke a violent reaction among Palestinians. Well, it worked. Once the killing in Jerusalem started, that news along with false rumors of Jewish attacks on the Al-Aqsa Mosque spread quickly to Hebron, where the Palestinians, in an unjustified fit of faux revenge, killed the non-Zionist religious Jews, whose small community had lived in Hebron in peace for hundreds of years.

In fact, the August 1929 riots in Jerusalem, Hebron and elsewhere resulted in "207 dead and 379 wounded among the population of Palestine, of which the dead included eighty-seven Arabs (Christian and Moslem) and 120 Jews, the wounded 181 Arabs and 198 Jews," according to official British casualty lists, as recounted by US journalist James Vincent Sheean, reporting from Palestine at the time.

Sheean's landmark 1935 book, *Personal History*, devotes an entire chapter, "Holy Land," to the 1929 riots. On the Hebron and Jerusalem bloodshed, Sheean concluded, "I was bitterly indignant with the Zionists for having, I believed, brought on this disaster." Sheean's credentials as a world-class journalist and author are above reproach. *Personal History* was named one of the 100 best works of twentieth-century American journalism by New York University's journalism department. Hayes owes it to the dead on both sides to report the truth.

Lawrence J. Maushard

Silver Spring, Md.

Christopher Hayes ignores for the most part the history of Hebron. Patriarchs of the Jewish religion are buried there—not only Abraham, as Hayes mentioned, but also Isaac and Jacob. There was a strong Jewish presence in that city until successive massacres starting in 1929 caused the Jews of the city to flee. From 1948 to 1967 Jews were not permitted in Hebron, where a mosque was built over that second-holiest shrine of Judaism.

We should be pleased rather than angry that Jews have returned to that city and are honoring their forefathers, who are sacred to Christians as well as Jews.

Nelson Marans

letters@thenation.com

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Deficit Panic Disorder

The economy has some major problems: a record number of homes are in foreclosure; the wealth gap is greater than at any time since the 1920s; banks still aren't lending; and unemployment is stuck at 10 percent, creating the conditions for a deflationary spiral. These are all reasons enough to jolt the political system into action to provide a second stimulus to boost employment. But the jobs crisis is not what has Washington in a tizzy. Instead, the Beltway is going ballistic over a problem that has been blown way out of proportion—the deficit.

EDITORIAL

Here's one instance in which the common sense of ordinary Americans should temper the establishment's freakout. Just 4 percent of voters say that the deficit should be Congress's number-one priority, far below jobs (56 percent) and healthcare (14 percent). In fact, what Washington calls *The Deficit Crisis!* is really two separate issues related to jobs and healthcare. The first is a short-term deficit created by a combination of factors: George W. Bush's tax cuts; his multitrillion-dollar wars; his boondoggle with Big Pharma, Medicare Part D; the recession; and temporary stimulus spending under President Obama to alleviate the recession. The second is the threat of a long-term deficit brought about almost entirely by rising healthcare costs, which could double Medicare payments as a share of GDP by 2035 if—and it's a big if—healthcare laws remain in their current form.

Instead of dealing with these issues separately and soberly, the chairs of Obama's bipartisan Commission on Fiscal Responsibility—Erskine Bowles and Alan Simpson—mashed them together, which had the effect of sending Washington into a full-blown deficit panic attack. Their prescribed treatment for the malady they've diagnosed is to amputate parts of the government, slashing Medicare and other programs, freezing government wages and downsizing the federal workforce. For good measure, deficit hawks have thrown Social Security into the mix, even though Social Security payments go up by only 1 percent of GDP by 2030, a one-time bump easily addressed by tiny modifications to taxes and benefits.

A reality-based deficit commission would have noted that at about 10 percent of GDP, the short-term deficit is modest compared with World War II levels and that bringing it down to reasonable levels is quick work. Some combination of cuts to the military, tax increases on corporations and the rich, and small cuts to discretionary spending would do it. Getting the economy going again is most important; economic growth means greater tax revenue, which is why smart short-term stimulus *is* deficit reduction—and why panicky austerity measures are the last thing the economy needs right now.

As for the long-term deficit, the issue is really a matter of healthcare policy, one that recent legislation tried, but did too little, to fix. But by framing the issue as a deficit crisis, fiscal conservatives implant the notion that there's nothing more to be done with healthcare reform (hello? single-payer?) and that the only solution is to cut Medicare. This does nothing to control healthcare costs, but it does unload the burden onto the private sector.

Thankfully, these recommendations are not final; the handful of progressives on board could amend them before they reach Congress (see Representative Jan Schakowsky's much more sensible plan). But progressives should also challenge the premise of this debate. Deficit hysteria is just a pretext for ideological and class warfare by "bipartisan" means. Let's not dignify it with our participation.

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Funny Money

The president and the Federal Reserve chair were a trifle premature last year when they congratulated themselves for saving the country from a depression. The Fed has now put that claim on hold. Ben Bernanke conceded as much when he dropped the Fed's $600 billion love bomb on the economy, hoping to blow away the negative forces threatening Big D, which stands for deflation and depression. Bernanke announced this dramatic move with his usual bland understatement and the opaque technical label "quantitative easing." QE stands for scared central bankers. The government's fiscal policy is paralyzed: Democrats belatedly realize they did not do nearly enough to stimulate the economy, but do-nothing Republicans, abetted by some spineless Dems, are insisting on spending cuts and budget balancing. Barack Obama, characteristically, says he wants to do some of both.

COMMENT

So the Fed decided it has to act alone. It intends to repeat what it did two years ago at the height of the financial crisis: pump up the money supply in order to head off a dangerous spiral of deflationary forces—falling prices that lead to more defaulting debts, more unemployment, more lost output. That same destructive cycle is what led to the Great Depression after the financial collapse of 1929. Bernanke says it can't happen again. Just in case he's wrong, he has turned on the fire hose with a massive purchase of long-term Treasury bonds. The Fed says it will keep pumping easy money into the economic system until it works—lowering long-term interest rates to encourage big-ticket consumption and new investment while weakening the dollar's value to boost US exports. The central bank did not find funny money under the mattress. It is creating this $600 billion for a compelling public purpose—averting catastrophe (again). Bernanke says he will buy still more Treasuries with the interest collected on mortgage securities, which will push the overall injection to nearly $900 billion—bigger than TARP.

The right is attacking him, but I would offer two muted cheers for the Fed—at least it is doing something. But the problem is, it probably won't succeed. Flooding the financial markets with a surfeit of money should, in theory, prevent a catastrophic monetary deflation, but it is not so clear that this will revive the stalled economic engine. Pumping tons of new money into the banking system and financial markets will definitely make bankers and big-time investors feel better—stock markets and commodity traders are already bubbling with hope. But this will not do much for business enterprise, not to mention unemployed workers and families facing foreclosure.

Bernanke is an orthodox monetary conservative, adhering to scripture taught by Milton Friedman, not John Maynard Keynes. As Keynes taught, what excites the "animal spirits" of businesspeople is the sight of willing customers with money to spend, eager to buy stuff. But consumer demand is exactly what bankers and business guys can't see at present. The economic problem is located on the demand side. Alas, the country is still governed by policy-makers enthralled by supply-side theory.

The Federal Reserve's solution essentially takes the long way around the barn. It will be funneling the $600 billion through

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Noted.

DEATH IN TEXAS: The same week **George W. Bush** released a memoir rationalizing his murderous wars, the **Texas Observer** broke a story that could prove he has more innocent blood on his hands. **Claude Jones** died in the Texas death chamber in 2000, the final prisoner executed while Bush was governor. Jones's conviction rested on a single piece of forensic evidence—a hair he swore belonged to someone else. Jones sought a stay of execution to get DNA testing, but he was denied by the courts and Bush. A decade later, DNA has proved what Jones always claimed: the hair was not his. Instead, it matched the victim. Not only was Jones convicted on false evidence; it's possible Texas executed an innocent man.

The discovery is part of a sickening trend that should have enormous implications but has done little to slow state executions. Last year, an investigation by **The New Yorker** thoroughly debunked the evidence used to execute **Cameron Todd Willingham** in 2004 for killing his daughters. Governor **Rick Perry**, who maintains that Willingham was a "monster," has tried to quash a probe into the case. But even he can't cover up the fact that the state has condemned innocent men to die. In October **Anthony Graves** became the twelfth Texas prisoner exonerated from death row.

Meanwhile, **Hank Skinner**, who got a stay from the Supreme Court as he ate his last meal, is fighting to test DNA evidence many believe could exonerate him. Whether this happens while he's still alive remains to be seen. As one activist says, "In Texas, it doesn't matter if you're innocent. They'll kill you anyway." LILIANA SEGURA

PULLING RANK: Newly elected Oakland Mayor **Jean Quan** ran as a candidate with deep roots in the Bay Area, where her great-grandfather and grandfather settled in 1906. As a veteran community activist, former school board member and current City Council member, she brought experience and smart progressive proposals to the race. What she lacked was big money and the big-time connections of the more conservative front-runner, former California State Senate president pro tempore **Don Perata**. In a traditional election, Perata would almost certainly have won, but Oakland has a ranked-choice voting system, which lets voters rank their top three choices.

Under ranked-choice, if no candidate wins a majority, candidates who receive the fewest first-place votes are eliminated and second and third choices are added to the existing tally and counted to determine a winner. As the votes are reassigned, a consensus candidate with broad appeal is more likely to emerge as the winner than a candidate with narrower appeal. Quan positioned herself as the broad-appeal contender, respecting that people might back other candidates in the ten-way race but urging everyone to make her their second choice. Voters did just that. Though she was outspent roughly four to one by Perata, she prevailed after accumulating the second-choice votes of Oakland residents who had backed other progressives.

Instead of rewarding candidates who run "polarizing" campaigns, notes FairVote's **Steven Hill**, a ranked-choice system helps ensure that "candidates who can build a coalition using those ranked ballots are going to do well."

"This is going to be a race that people are going to be studying for a long time," says Quan. "It gives hope to people who are outspent. It gives hope to people, as long as you can organize your neighborhoods and you get volunteers, that you can win." JOHN NICHOLS

A WIN FOR IMMIGRANTS: In a major setback for hardline anti-immigrant groups, the California Supreme Court unanimously ruled on November 15 that undocumented immigrants can continue to be eligible for in-state tuition at the state's public colleges and universities. Under California law **AB 540** undocumented students can pay in-state tuition if they attend a state high school for three years and meet other requirements. Without AB 540, most undocumented students could not afford to pay out-of-state tuition because they are ineligible for any state or federal financial aid.

Kris Kobach, author of Arizona's infamous **SB 1070** law, filed a lawsuit challenging AB 540, claiming that it violates a federal law prohibiting undocumented immigrants from eligibility for education benefits based on residency unless citizens are also eligible. The court rejected Kobach's argument, ruling that AB 540 is not based on state residence and therefore does not conflict with federal law.

David Cho, an undocumented Korean undergraduate student at the University of California, Los Angeles, was relieved to hear the news: "This means that undocumented students like me can stay in school. Now I can continue to get a college education that means everything to me."

Kobach said he intends to appeal the decision to the US Supreme Court, but advocates are optimistic that the Court will deny review. CARMINA OCAMPO

KUDOS FOR BIO'S BRIO: **D.D. Guttenplan**, London correspondent for *The Nation*, has been awarded this year's **Ann M. Sperber** prize in recognition of his biography *American Radical: The Life and Times of I.F. Stone*. Guttenplan received the award from **John Harrington**, dean of the arts and sciences faculty at Fordham University, in a ceremony on November 16. Guttenplan modestly said that he was pleased to accept the honor because "it means my book might not be totally forgotten."

Previous recipients include *The Nation*'s **Victor Navasky** and historian **Todd DePastino**. The prize is given annually "in recognition of a biography or autobiography of a journalist or media figure that meets the standard of excellence set by the work of Ann M. Sperber," best known for her biography of broadcaster **Edward R. Murrow**.

I.F. Stone once described himself as "a wholly independent newspaperman, standing alone, without organizational or party backing, beholden to no one but my good readers. I am even one up on **Benjamin Franklin**—I do not accept advertising."

Guttenplan was drawn to Stone's uncompromisingly political writing. Stone was "a troublemaker, and I'm drawn to troublemakers…. I wanted to take a long look at someone who always thought of journalism as a form of politics," he said. "The left in America has no historical memory, so we accept the right's view that they are the real Americans." JENNIFER O'MAHONY

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banks already flush with trillions they are reluctant to lend. Why lend to companies to build new factories when they can't sell the stuff they already make?

I propose a more direct solution, if people in government have the nerve and imagination to try it. The Fed could skip over the banks and, instead of buying Treasuries with its newly created money, pump it directly into the real economy of consumers and producers, where it would finance new demand and rejuvenate the economic activity needed for genuine recovery. That direct action is a no-no to central bankers and orthodox monetary economists, but Lincoln did it during the Civil War, and his greenback currency helped save the Union.

Fed governors will claim they are forbidden by law from directly supporting nonfinancial enterprises, but the Fed has already lost its virginity on that question. During the financial bailouts, the Fed pumped billions into AIG—an insurance company, not a bank—and in effect became its owner. In any case, the Fed's legal authority to lend is deliberately vague. It can lend to nearly anyone, even local governments, if it finds "unusual and exigent circumstances." Congress can authorize the Fed to pump its $600 billion into building infrastructure, creating employment and stimulating consumer demand, assuming proper safeguards.

One obvious solution is for Congress to create the federal Recovery and Reconstruction Bank some are advocating. The new bank would be given a list of well-defined projects and appropriations, but its financing would rely mainly on money borrowed by selling bonds to investors. The Federal Reserve's new money would be interest-free and governed by special performance bonds—the reconstruction bank would have to pay the money back only if it failed to deliver the promised projects. That would impose discipline on the new bank and on Congress. The Fed could hold the infrastructure bonds in its own portfolio, where it already holds $1.1 trillion in mortgage-backed securities created by the reckless banking industry. The government would, in effect, be able to borrow huge sums interest-free and pay off the long-term loans over many years, much like corporate bonds or home mortgages. The money, once expended on construction and other projects, would immediately circulate through the regular banking system, indistinguishable from any other money, instead of sitting idle as bank reserves.

Of course, the bankers will scream because they will be cut out of the money-creation chain that is so profitable for them, in which the Fed hands them free money as reserves, with the banks lending it out and collecting interest from the borrowers. Most monetary economists will denounce the idea of a Fed-financed infrastructure bank as heresy. They prefer that the Fed remain an oddly cloistered and unaccountable institution of government, independent of all outside influence except that of the bankers.

The real obstacle to direct Fed stimulus is primarily the political community. It is largely composed of clueless senators and representatives intimidated by the financiers and bankers, who lead them around by the nose. But the country is mired in a historic crisis. Where are leaders with the imagination and guts to break some eggs and make an omelet? WILLIAM GREIDER

Calvin Trillin, Deadline Poet

An Optimist Greets the New Speaker of the House

This much you have to grant to Speaker Boehner:

Some others in the party are insaner.

The 'Giving' Season

COMMENT

It's that time of the year. On November 7, the *New York Times* launched its ninety-ninth Neediest Cases Fund campaign. Three days later, in an article headlined "The rich are different from you and me. They give more," reporter Jan Rosen summarized the latest Bank of America Merrill Lynch study of "High Net Worth Philanthropy," which, like previous studies, praised the wealthy for their generosity (though noting that, in 2009, they gave a median of just 3.4 percent of their income to charity). In a second "Giving" article published that same day, Stephanie Strom discussed the status of the "Giving Pledge, a commitment by 40 of the wealthiest Americans to give away at least half of their fortunes, about $600 billion."

Queried on the "emerging debate" the pledge had stimulated "about the influence that wealth has in the country today and the fears that philanthropy is being used to bend public policy," Strom noted that pledge signers like Bernard Marcus, co-founder of Home Depot, were dumbfounded by it. "All this money is going for charity to help people—what kind of numbskull would find something wrong with that?"

Pardon me for acting the Grinch in this "giving" season, but I feel obligated to call attention to the fact that under current federal tax codes almost all of those who give (and itemize their deductions) are eligible for and receive a tax deduction of up to 35 percent. When Mr. and Ms. Rich Alumni make a $1,000 contribution to their private university, or to their church, or to fix up the park across the street, or to subsidize the concert hall they patronize, it costs them only $650. The remaining $350 comes from the taxes they would otherwise have had to pay on that $1,000. I'm delighted that Harvard was able to raise $596 million last year, but if we assume that most of it came from those in the highest tax bracket who itemized their deductions, that $596 million breaks down to about $387 million from the donors and $209 million from the Treasury in forgone tax revenues.

In early 2009 the Obama administration proposed a decrease from 35 percent to 28 percent on the top rates for deductions for mortgage interest and charitable donations, claiming that this adjustment would generate $318 billion in taxes over the next ten years to help pay for healthcare reform. The suggestion was no sooner voiced than it was killed by Congress after withering criticism from both sides of the aisle. The outcry about messing

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with the charitable tax deduction was particularly raucous. The charitable deduction has become so sacrosanct that not even President Obama's bipartisan debt-reduction commission—which has called for limiting or eliminating mortgage-interest deductions—dared suggest any comparable adjustment to the rates for charitable deductions.

The philanthropic sector, fed in part by the charitable deduction, has grown beyond all expectations in the past quarter-century. So too has the influence it wields over public policy. In 2009 charitable giving totaled more than $300 billion, or 2.1 percent of the GDP. Though Bill Gates and Warren Buffett have become the beneficent faces of twenty-first-century philanthropy, foundations like theirs account for only about 13 percent of total giving. In 2009 fully 83 percent, or more than $250 billion, was given by individuals and estate bequests. Some 70 percent of this total came from the 3.1 percent of Americans with incomes greater than $200,000 and/or assets exceeding $1 million.

Where does this money go? Some to disaster relief or to feed, clothe and shelter the poor—but not very much. Former Labor Secretary Robert Reich claims that only about 10 percent of charitable giving goes to the poor and needy. A third goes to religious organizations; 13 percent to education; 7 percent to hospitals, healthcare organizations and research; 4 percent to arts and culture; 3 percent to international peace and relief efforts; 2 percent to environmental and animal-related causes.

Although it is never easy to quantify giving, closer scrutiny of individual, as opposed to foundation, funding indicates that much of it goes to causes that directly or indirectly benefit the donors. Individual donors are more likely to give to the church or synagogue they or members of their families attend, to their alma maters, their children's private schools and the museums and cultural institutions they patronize. To bring the matter closer to home, those who live near Central Park give money to the Central Park Conservancy, not to rehabilitate Rufus King Park in Jamaica, Queens, and to the Metropolitan Museum of Art or the Metropolitan Opera, not to the Cultural Collaborative Jamaica or to the Queens Symphony.

From left and right, there have been calls to revise the charitable deduction. From the left, Reich suggests we eliminate the deduction for all donations except those that directly benefit the poor. Thus, a gift to the Salvation Army would be tax deductible, but not necessarily one to Harvard or to the Metropolitan Opera. From the right, Senator Charles Grassley wants to review and possibly rescind the billions in tax breaks that nonprofit hospitals receive until those hospitals demonstrate that they provide the larger community with "significant, measurable benefits."

Defenders of the charitable deduction argue that any downward adjustment will lead to a substantial reduction in the amount given to charity. And that may well be true. But is a reduction in the income, assets and expenditures of the philanthropic sector such a terrible thing, especially when we take into consideration that every $100 donated to charity by a high-income person means $35 less to the Treasury?

The question we have to ask in the end is, Who do we want to decide how our money is spent: wealthy donors or our elected representatives? Does wealth confer on those who have accumulated it special wisdom or enhanced compassion? No one would claim that our elected officials are solons or saints. But I, for one, would rather see a democratically elected body, accountable to the voters, make basic decisions about our schools, healthcare institutions and cultural priorities.

A century ago, at the dawn of the age of philanthropy, there was much more questioning of the wisdom of accepting, let alone celebrating, the rich and their charities. The protest against decisions made by Andrew Carnegie, John D. Rockefeller and Russell Sage to give millions to private foundations was such that in 1912 Congress organized a Commission on Industrial Relations to investigate whether those foundations posed "a menace to the Republic's future" because they concentrated so much wealth in the hands of unelected and unaccountable trustees.

We have grown so accustomed to the accumulation of wealth in the hands of the few and to the evisceration of the "progressive" element in what used to be called the progressive income tax—and we are so reliant on grants from foundations and the wealthy—that we no longer ask the questions that theologians, labor leaders, workers, populists and professors did a century ago.

We may applaud the efforts of humanitarian philanthropies that support progressive organizations—and even some weekly opinion journals—but we must not lose sight of the larger global impact of giving and the increasing power accumulated by unregulated, untaxed foundations. Isn't it time to at least inquire about the long-term effects of the charitable deduction? Not to do so is equivalent to sitting quietly on our deck chairs as the wealthy and their billion-dollar foundations are given huge tax subsidies to assist them in bankrolling tax-exempt charitable organizations that support such causes as outlawing abortion and birth control, defunding public schools, abolishing inheritance and income taxes, ending gun control, withdrawing funding from the United Nations and other international organizations, eliminating environmental protections, ridiculing climate change science and combating climate change initiatives, repealing healthcare legislation and deifying Friedrich Hayek. DAVID NASAW

David Nasaw, the Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr. Professor of History at the CUNY Graduate Center, is the author of several books, including, most recently, Andrew Carnegie.

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You've met three of the **GOP's Young Guns** in this issue. View our companion slide show for more on their records and other newly elected Republicans to keep an eye on. Plus: check out our slide show on what we can expect from new House committee chairs on immigration, climate, labor and more.

Even people who oppose "don't ask, don't tell" assume it interferes only with the ability of gay service members to serve openly, letting them conduct their private lives in private. Wrong, say Daniel Redman and Ilona Turner in **Don't Ask, Don't Tell—Anyone, Anywhere**.

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Eric Alterman

Obama's Failures… and Ours

In a brilliant op-ed published in the *LA Times* immediately after the midterm elections, longtime educator and organizer Marshall Ganz observed that Barack Obama "entered office wrapped in a mantle of moral leadership. His call for change was rooted in values that had long been eclipsed in our public life: a sense of mutual responsibility, commitment to equality and belief in inclusive diversity. Those values inspired a new generation of voters, restored faith to the cynical and created a national movement. Now, eighteen months and an 'enthusiasm gap' later, the nation's major challenges remain largely unmet, and a discredited conservative movement has reinvented itself in a more virulent form." Borrowing categorical distinctions conceived by political scientist James MacGregor Burns in the late 1970s, Ganz (who played a role in mapping out the original organizing strategy for the Obama campaign) assessed that immediately upon becoming president, Obama abandoned the "transformational" model promised by his presidential campaign in favor of a "transactional" model. "'Transformational' leadership," Ganz explained, "engages followers in the risky and often exhilarating work of changing the world, work that often changes the activists themselves. Its sources are shared values that become wellsprings of the courage, creativity and hope needed to open new pathways to success. 'Transactional' leadership, on the other hand, is about horse-trading, operating within the routine, and it is practiced to maintain, rather than change, the status quo."

The nation was ready for change, but Obama picked the status quo. And so "much of the public's anger, disappointment and frustration has been turned on a leader who failed to lead." Ganz identified "three crucial choices that undermined the president's transformational mission": "First, he abandoned the bully pulpit of moral argument and public education. Next, he chose to lead with a politics of compromise rather than advocacy. And finally, he chose to demobilize the movement that elected him president. By shifting focus from a public ready to drive change—as in 'yes we can'—he shifted the focus to himself and attempted to negotiate change from the inside, as in 'yes I can.'"

As a result of these choices, Obama not only failed to convince the public that he can turn the economy around—the central axis upon which judgment of the success or failure of his presidency will turn—but also lost the confidence of many of his original supporters. Yet in his refusal to adapt the inspirational rhetoric of his campaign to his presidency, he allowed the forces of right-wing reaction to claim the mantle of the common man. They even managed to make it appear to most people as if the Democrats, rather than the Republicans, were the party in the pocket of Wall Street and the big-spending fat cats.

Once again, it's hard to know whether Obama's legislative record could have been improved by a savvier strategy that dispensed with the misguided reliance on Republican reasonableness suddenly manifesting itself somewhere down the road. What is easy to imagine, however, is a much stronger showing for Democrats in the 2010 election and beyond, and with it the possibility of building on the achievements of the previous two years. The "youth vote" was one of the few categories of voters to stick with Democrats in 2010. As Ruy Teixeira and John Halpin of the Center for American Progress Action Fund observe, "Young people aged 18–29 years old supported Democrats by a 13-point margin in the 2010 election (55 percent to 42 percent)." But while the young 'uns made up 18 percent of the electorate two years ago, they fell to just 11 percent in 2010. Part of the explanation for the evident disillusion must lie with the unrealistic expectations of first-time voters. That's a given. But the disappearance of the heroic narrative of the campaign and its replacement with an ongoing series of backroom dealings of exactly the kind Candidate Obama so eloquently condemned must be apportioned the lion's share of the blame. Imagine if young people and first-time voters heard their president sounding like the candidate who told his audience, upon securing the Democratic nomination for president, "We will be able to look back and tell our children that this was the moment when we began to provide care for the sick and good jobs to the jobless; this was the moment when the rise of the oceans began to slow and our planet began to heal; this was the moment when we ended a war and secured our nation and restored our image as the last, best hope on earth."

All presidents make errors that appear obvious in retrospect. But Obama's mistakes in office are nowhere near the entire story. The rest of us must shoulder our share of the blame as well. A few days after the midterm elections, Van Jones spoke to a progressive gathering in Washington. After recalling the pageant of progressive performers who came to DC to celebrate Obama's inauguration at the Lincoln Memorial—which featured, among many others, Bono, Bruce Springsteen, Beyoncé, Stevie Wonder, Pete Seeger and the Gay Men's Chorus of Washington—Jones reminded his listeners, "You had the full beauty of the American people, the full force of our culture on display…. None of those people quit the movement and joined the Tea Party. All that creativity, all that power, all that spirit, all that soul—it's still here. We went from We Are One to We Are Done…. Well, guess what? The days are now over when any of us can afford to wait for a politician in Washington, DC, to set the tone and the tenor and the face of our movement."

The essential ingredient missing from Obama's campaign of hope and change was the hard work that would be necessary to convert the former into the latter—not only on his part but on ours as well. ■

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Gary Younge

How the Tea Is Brewed

Over a breakfast of pancakes, scrambled eggs and bacon in a back room of the Nugget Casino in Pahrump, rural Nevada, shortly before the midterm elections, the talk among some forty men turned to the most propitious moment for armed insurrection.

"The government needs to know that we will use [our arms] if they continue down the path they're on. We're not even ready. We need to get ready."

Another, fearing this could give a visiting journalist the wrong impression, insists that few in the room would agree with such a ridiculous view.

But it turned out that quite a few did. "Look how much damage Barack Obama and his socialist Congress did in eighteen months," bellows another. "It could take us ten years to undo this crap. And you say we can't consider using weapons."

They call it the Old Farts Club: a gathering of elderly conservative men that has been meeting every Friday morning for the past five years at the Nugget for breakfast and a bull session that ranges from judges—one man calls for Sonia Sotomayor and Elena Kagan to be removed from the Supreme Court—to the fate of a local park.

A straw poll reveals that none think Harry Reid can beat Sharron Angle without stealing the election.

Four days later, in a plush suite at the Aria Hotel, the Tea Party Express watched Harry Reid win fair and square. They'd chosen the Aria because they wanted to taunt Reid, who was holding his election-night event there. Despite the open bar and the catered treats, it was a tough one to swallow.

Those two scenes—at the Nugget and the Aria—illustrate two distinct faces of the Tea Party. The first, at the base, is a very loosely affiliated group of like-minded people who may "identify" with the Tea Party but have no connection beyond that. The second, purportedly at the helm, is a series of well-funded competing organizations that pose as leaders of that base but in fact have no control or even link to it outside the media. Politically speaking, neither really exists. Or at least not as billed.

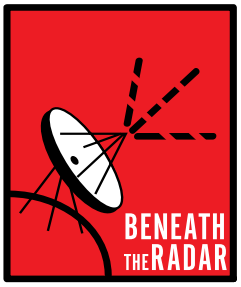
Where the base is concerned, there is no structure, leader or membership that links it to a bigger movement. Beyond "small government" and Obama-bashing, it's not clear what the various groups would agree on. Some, like the Old Farts Club, meet regularly and, while they may get their talking points from Fox News, are nonetheless independent.

To those who dismiss the Tea Party as nothing more than "astroturf" (fake grassroots), such activity poses a challenge. The country has a long history of grassroots conservative activism. Indeed, one of the problems with the Tea Party label is that, far from describing a new phenomenon, it depicts an old one—the hard right—that happens to be enjoying an episodic resurgence. These people didn't join it; it joined them. But even following Republicans' midterm victories, the nature of that resurgence can be overstated and misunderstood.

An attempt over several months by the *Washington Post* to contact every single Tea Party group found that it was unclear if many actually functioned. Seventy percent said they had not been involved in a political event in a year—the very year the Tea Party made its most dramatic gains. The *Post* described the Tea Party as "not so much a movement as a disparate band of vaguely connected gatherings that do surprisingly little to engage in the political process."

"When a group lists themselves on our Web site, that's a group," Mark Meckler, a founding member of the Tea Party Patriots, told the *Post*. "That group could be one person, it could be 10 people, it could come in and out of existence—we don't know."

This comes more by way of description than derision. It is how movement-building goes. I have seen local antiwar and healthcare groups that live or die by the energy of just one or two people. Nonetheless, such facts are incompatible with the portrayal of a vibrant insurgent ideological entity capable of taking over first the Republican Party and then the country.



For that, one must go back to the second Tea Party, on the twentieth floor of the Aria and elsewhere. It is groups like the Tea Party Express, Tea Party Patriots, FreedomWorks and Americans for Prosperity that claim in different ways to speak for that base. Each one is run by veteran right-wing operatives who at some stage have been part of the GOP establishment. With the help of uncritical and unending coverage by Fox News, they have been able to amplify the inchoate, incoherent demands of the base and thereby transform it into what looks like a formidable electoral force.

The trouble is that these groups—and the Congressional representatives they have helped elect—have almost no relationship to that base beyond partial listservs. No threat, demand, assertion or ultimatum made in the name of the Tea Party is credible. That doesn't mean it's not possible to deliver on any of them, but nothing in the immediate aftermath of the election has suggested that might be likely.

Early on, Minnesota motormouth Michele Bachmann, leader of the Tea Party Caucus in the House, challenged a Republican establishment candidate for the number-four spot in the House, only to withdraw within a week after her bid, launched primarily through the media, failed to gain traction. Elsewhere there have been laughable scuffles between Tea Party organizations competing, mostly in vain, for the attention of Republican freshmen.

Several voices without a body; several bodies without a voice: Tea Party, a name with electoral appeal in search of ideological coherence and a political purpose. None of which should make liberals complacent. If these groups can do this much damage when they are this disorganized, imagine what might happen if they got it together. ■

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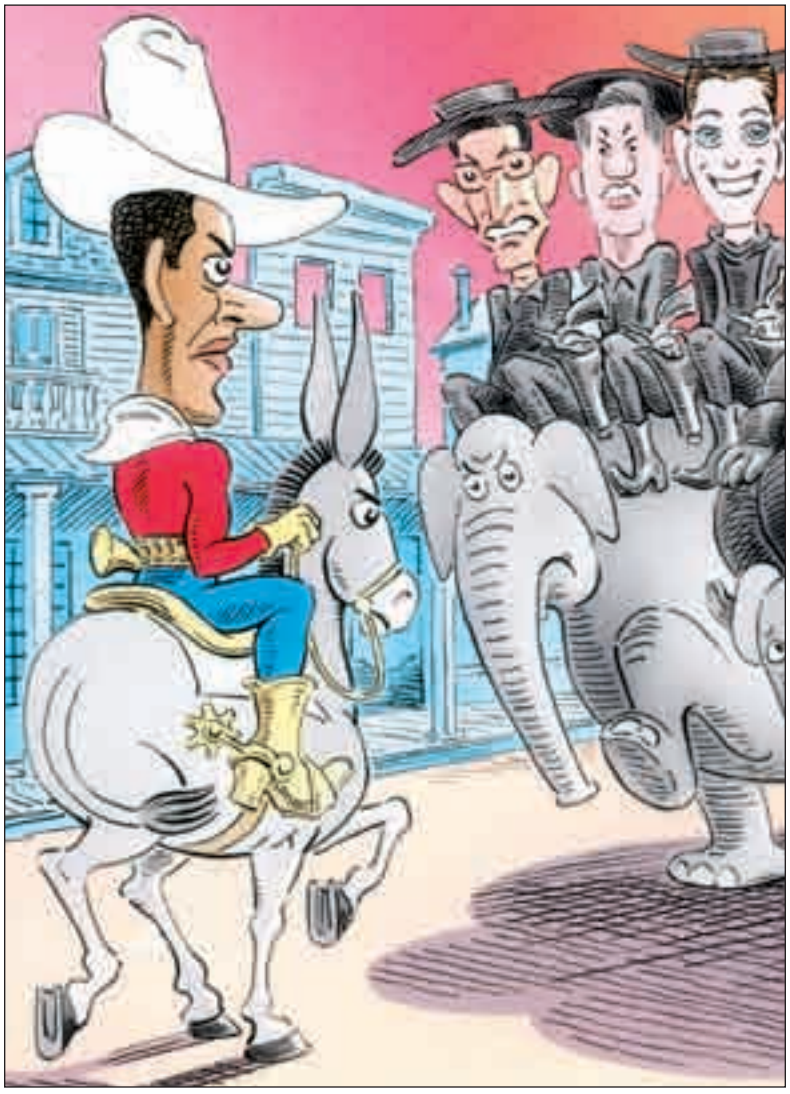
The Young Guns of the GOP

Representative Paul Ryan

by JOHN NICHOLS

If the Tea Party really is all about debts, deficits, spending and taxes—as opposed to the witchcraft, immigrant-bashing, birther fantasies and generalized Obama-hatred that forms its caricature—then Paul Ryan is the movement's Congressman. Handsome, good-natured and blessed with an ability to reduce the most complicated fiscal issues to conservative talking points that just happen to echo Wall Street's wish list, the Wisconsin representative has none of the rough edges of Michele Bachmann or Rand Paul. He is resolutely polite, certain without being overbearing, confident at the debate podium and, to a greater extent than any prominent Republican of the past two decades, Reaganesque.



Unfortunately, he has something else in common with the fortieth president: an approach to budget issues that owes more to Ayn Rand's paranoid fears about making even the most minimal civic demands on "productive" elites than to facts, figures or economic realism. Ryan's devotion to Rand, the author of dystopian novels like *Atlas Shrugged* and *The Fountainhead* and a favorite of the Tea Party movement's Glenn Beck wing, is fanatical. He requires Congressional staffers to read Rand's books and heaps praise on the prophetess of selfishness in YouTube videos that even fellow Republicans quietly acknowledge are unsettling.

Like another Rand devotee, former Federal Reserve chair Alan Greenspan, Ryan sees government not just as the "problem" Reagan described but as a greater threat to freedoms than the most extreme Tea Partisans imagine. Come January the Wisconsinite, who at 40 is one of the youngest members of Congress, will finally be in a position to address that perceived threat as chair of the Budget Committee, perhaps the most important in the new House. But this is not a case of an outsider storming the battlements and seizing a position of power. For all his Tea Party trappings, Ryan is a consummate insider, with a DC résumé extending back to the days of the first Bush presidency. This native of the hard-pressed Wisconsin factory town of Janesville spent almost a decade as an aide to conservative senators and twelve years representing a swing district that previously sent Democrat Les Aspin to chair the House Armed Services Committee. Ryan is about to put his long apprenticeship to work as one of the most definitional members of the new Congress.

Ryan's role as Budget Committee chair is almost certain to put him in conflict with President Obama, with whom the Congressman clashed earlier this year during a session on budget matters and entitlement spending. That, in turn, will buttress a profile that is sufficiently prominent to have stirred speculation that Ryan might be a 2012 GOP vice presidential prospect and, ultimately, a presidential contender.

A natural campaigner and landslide winner in a district that voted for Obama, Ryan has meticulously extended his influence in recent months as a star speaker on the Tea Party circuit, a campaigner for fellow Republicans and a guest on Beck's radio show and on Fox TV. Ryan now has a formal platform from which to argue for the radical shift in spending priorities outlined in his Roadmap for America's Future. That document, which he drafted as his party's prospects sank toward the close of George W. Bush's presidency, became an unofficial manifesto for economic conservatives during the 2010 election season.

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Ryan, a faithful follower of free-market orthodoxies outlined by Milton Friedman and Friedrich von Hayek, will thus be the highest-profile advocate for what many imagine to be "Reaganomics" since Reagan. But Ryan goes much further than did the fortieth president. The Congressman's latest version of the Roadmap for America's Future would:

§ begin the process of privatizing Social Security;

§ replace Medicare as we know it and most of Medicaid with a voucher program that would eventually reduce the value of the vouchers;

§ abolish the State Children's Health Insurance Program (S-CHIP);

§ abolish the corporate income tax;

§ abolish the estate tax and the alternative minimum tax;

§ eliminate income taxes on capital gains, dividends and interest;

§ provide across-the-board tax cuts to even the richest Americans;

§ explore flat tax and consumption tax models that do away with progressive taxation.

Those proposals are sure to provoke fights—not just with the White House and Congressional Democrats but with some Republicans too. When Ryan proposed an alternative budget in 2009, it won only 137 votes in the House, with thirty-eight Republicans joining Democrats to oppose the plan. Ryan was sharply criticized in 2009 for failing to make even a minimal attempt to balance his budget proposal.

Dismissing Ryan's Roadmap as a "sham," Nobel Prize–winning economist Paul Krugman says that, if implemented, it would cause a $4 trillion revenue shortfall over the next decade. Krugman frets that Ryan's approach "would raise taxes for 95 percent of the population" while cutting them for corporations and the wealthiest Americans so deeply that policymakers would be faced with a choice between gutting popular programs like Medicare and ballooning the deficit.

Even sympathetic economists like Ted Gayer argue that Republicans would need to amend many of Ryan's proposals in order to avoid a severe revenue shortfall. But Ryan's fans, led by former House majority leader and Tea Party patron Dick Armey, are mustering a coalition to oppose any such compromise. Armey promises to use his FreedomWorks network to promote the Roadmap. Ryan's ideas "will be taken more seriously if there are outside forces [pressuring] members of Congress," Armey says. "Republicans have been too timid to make his arguments. Now those same ideas have a ready-made audience."

Ryan is ready. Like Greenspan, he's a true-believing long-distance runner who will devote all the time it takes to popularize ideas borrowed from the economic fringe and the Ayn Rand library. He won't implement his agenda in 2011. His purpose is to shape the debate and, with the help of Armey's Tea Party and its amen corner in the media, position Republicans for 2012 victories that he believes will allow him to design a future in which Wall Street has our Social Security money, Medicare is a memory and billionaire Atlases can shrug off the last of their tax burdens and regulatory responsibilities. ■

Representative Eric Cantor

by ARI BERMAN

Disgraced superlobbyist Jack Abramoff used to name sandwiches at his Washington deli after his favorite politicians. The roast beef on challah was known as "the Eric Cantor." It was unveiled at a $500-a-plate fundraiser held for Cantor at Abramoff's restaurant in January 2003. The Virginia Congressman neglected to disclose the fundraiser, labeling it a "paperwork issue" and "chicken droppings." The event was hardly surprising—Cantor owes his prominence to Washington's lobbyist-industrial complex. In 2002 Abramoff ally Tom DeLay plucked Cantor, then a sophomore House member from Richmond, from obscurity and made him, at 39, the youngest member of the House Republican leadership. Now he's the second-highest-ranking Republican in the House and on a fast track to becoming speaker one day.

Cantor got there through a mix of fundraising prowess, media savvy and party devotion. As the only Jewish Republican in the House, he provides a crucial link between pro-Israel donors and Christian conservatives. And by virtue of his coveted seat on the powerful Ways and Means Committee, which oversees government revenues and spending, he's been able to raise more than $30 million for Republican colleagues from his favored companies in corporate America, like Goldman Sachs, JPMorgan Chase, Philip Morris and Blue Cross/Blue Shield. He's a staunch conservative—militantly pro-Israel on foreign policy and hostile to any type of tax—who earned a perfect 100 percent rating from the American Conservative Union in 2009 and led the fight against Obama's 2009 stimulus bill. Cantor is a prominent advocate for repealing "Obamacare" and has asked the public to vote on which government programs they'd like to cut, pledging to "put Uncle Sam on a diet." In a post-election meeting with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, Cantor "stressed that the new Republican majority will serve as a check on the administration," according to his office. (He also ludicrously accused Democrats of "dangerously fanning the flames" against Republicans in the wake of the healthcare bill and of firing a bullet into his Richmond office; this later turned out to be the result of random gunfire.)

Cantor wasn't always a small-government conservative. During the Bush era he voted for key planks of the corporate-friendly, big-government GOP agenda, such as Medicare Part D and the bank bailout. These votes later angered Tea Party activists, who have occasionally had a contentious relationship with the Republican leader. "I have yet to meet a Tea Party activist here who adores Rep. Eric Cantor," *Slate*'s Dave Weigel reported from the Virginia Tea Party Patriots convention in October. Over the summer, Cantor said he opposed the creation of a Tea Party caucus in the House and recently supported Texas

Ari Berman, a Nation *contributing writer, is the author of* Herding Donkeys: The Fight to Rebuild the Democratic Party and Reshape American Politics *(Farrar, Straus and Giroux).*

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Representative Jeb Hensarling over Tea Party darling Michele Bachmann in the race for Republican House Conference chair. In response, Fox News host Chris Wallace asked Cantor if he was trying to protect the GOP's "old boys' network."

Cantor is likely to take his cues from John Boehner in the new Congress and avoid making too many waves. He lacks the flamboyance of Boehner and the intellectual heft of right-wing wunderkind Paul Ryan. Cantor has always been a good soldier, and that's why Republican leaders and lobbyists like him so much. ■

Representative Kevin McCarthy

by SASHA ABRAMSKY

Kevin McCarthy, the incoming GOP House whip, is most often compared (by himself, among others) not to other Republicans but to Rahm Emanuel. Unlike the Tea Party insurgents who garnered so many headlines before the election, McCarthy in many ways typifies the new House GOP, not least because he's the author of the party's simple and opportunistic but effective Pledge to America. McCarthy is an inside player who has lived and breathed politics for decades, at least since his leadership of the College Republicans at the Cal State campus he attended as an undergraduate in the 1980s (after a brief sojourn as a delicatessen owner in his early 20s).

McCarthy used strong fundraising abilities in his campaigns for the California Statehouse in the early years of the century. Entering a legislature in which strict term limits had stripped away the presence of older, more experienced legislators, the youthful McCarthy soon took charge of his party's deeply conservative cadre of state legislators. And although he talked the talk on many conservative issues, especially on fiscal themes, he was also able to work with enough Democrats to get a series of budgets passed in the middle of the decade. Surprisingly, he forged a friendship with Democratic Party stalwart John Burton, who phoned to congratulate McCarthy recently on hearing that he was likely to be named Republican whip.

"He was an affable guy," recalls *Sacramento Bee* senior editor Dan Morain, who covered politics in the state capital while McCarthy was in town. "Able to articulate the Republican position. Smart guy. He was able to raise money. He was, as they say, operational."

Intensely ambitious, McCarthy soon made the move for Washington, successfully running for Congress in 2006. In the election cycles since then, he has assiduously courted banks and other big-business interests, receiving large amounts of PAC money from, and contributions from employees of, such titans as Goldman Sachs, Blue Cross/Blue Shield, AFLAC and the Independent Petroleum Association of America. And critically, McCarthy has helped his less able, less confident GOP peers get access to these funds too. GOP media consultant Wayne Johnson recalls seeing McCarthy coaching nervous freshman Congressmen on how to coax money out of local donors over the phone. In the 2010 election cycle, as he was making his move into more elite party circles, McCarthy raised a million dollars for candidates around the country, much of it from the insurance, securities, pharmaceutical, entertainment and healthcare industries. In a game of quid pro quo, this gives him a huge head start in the jockeying to secure seats on important committees and in the race for GOP leadership positions.

Hailing from the conservative Southern California desert town of Bakersfield, the 45-year-old McCarthy, who commutes from coast to coast on an almost weekly basis, came up through the legendary political machine surrounding onetime House Ways and Means Committee chair Bill Thomas. McCarthy learned to love the stuff of pragmatic victory far more than the joys of ideological purity. Thomas's people, explains Tony Quinn, co-editor of the *California Target Book*, a nonpartisan analysis of state and Congressional races, are "very practical, political people" who thrive in election environments; they love matching candidates to districts, distrust ideological rigidity and work their tails off to gain an edge for their party.

Like Rahm Emanuel, McCarthy is party-partisan, caring deeply for the institutional success of the GOP. The incoming whip, say observers, is far more interested in the game of politics than in complex theoretical policy models or one-size-fits-all ideological packages. "He would be far more exercised talking about water policy than about abortion or one of those hot-button issues," observes Johnson. "He doesn't manipulate symbols for a living. He's not a person who adopts five very popular positions, none of which he'll ever have an effect on in his life." (Others might take issue with that last point, given McCarthy's role as author of the GOP pledge.)

Over the past two years, McCarthy crisscrossed the country, scouting out local wannabe political figures who would gel with the needs of their specific Congressional districts, campaigning for them, helping them hone their message. Most of his candidates won. "The people he got in were not the Sharron Angle types, people who ended up being disasters as candidates," Quinn says. McCarthy's candidates, he says, "talked about taxes, overspending, healthcare. And they did very well in the suburbs, simply running on fiscal issues. He's very much a pragmatist."

As whip, McCarthy will have his job cut out for him. After all, although half the GOP freshmen owe their jobs in part to McCarthy and his pragmatic, deal-cutting vision of politics, the other half got in with significant Tea Party backing. They'll be looking to cut their mad-as-hell swaths through Washington. And McCarthy, a skilled Machiavellian who will not want to alienate voters and put the GOP majority at risk in 2012 by hewing too far to the right, will have the task of reining in his party's extremists. He might well succeed; he's clearly talented. But there's at least a chance it will end up proving a bridge too far. ■

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The Rise of Governor Wrecking Ball

With callous austerity measures, New Jersey's Chris Christie has made himself a contender.

by MICHAEL TRACEY

New Jersey Governor Chris Christie did not attend the first annual Virginia Tea Party Convention in October, hitherto the largest gathering of the movement's activist core. He did, however, win its presidential straw poll—edging out Sarah Palin, Mitt Romney and other potential 2012 Republican candidates—despite repeated denials of any interest in seeking higher office. The victory was another example of Christie's strangely magnetic appeal, which increasingly seems to transcend region, political faction and level of sophistication.

MEL EVANS/AP

From *National Review*, which ran an August cover story designating him the "Scourge of Trenton," to conservative bloggers electrified by his boisterous YouTube clips, just about every relevant Republican constituency has found something to be taken with in Chris Christie. Policy analysts in Washington appear just as enthralled by his critique of public pensions as are the familiar talk-radio personalities. "Ladies and gentlemen, is it wrong to love another man?" Rush Limbaugh asked one afternoon. "Because I love Chris Christie."

In a feat of strategic jujitsu, Christie has managed to tread a tenuous ideological line between Beltway Republicans and the Tea Party, endorsing Mike Castle over Christine O'Donnell in the Delaware Republican senatorial primary. The calculation implied that although he clearly welcomes its support, Christie is not tethered to the Tea Party's every whim; meanwhile, the Republican National Committee was happy to shuttle him around the country on behalf of various candidates this election cycle. Even among social conservatives, to whom Christie does not often pander, he has amassed impressive credentials: Brian Brown, president of the National Organization for Marriage, lauded "the victory of a pro-life, pro-marriage GOP governor in New Jersey" last year after Christie vowed to veto a same-sex marriage bill. This ubiquitous adoration suggests that should rumored presidential aspirations materialize, he may be able to unite the party's balkanized base.

But in the current political climate, fiscal austerity is paramount in the hierarchy of conservative priorities. Emboldened by the anti-tax, anti-spending fervor that propelled Republicans to victory this year, Christie has gained a national profile by insisting that in order to close a $2.2 billion budget deficit, New Jersey must sacrifice many of its most valued social programs—earning him the moniker "Governor Wrecking Ball." In the process, his agenda has become a model for what the incoming class of GOP legislators might pursue on state and federal levels. "He's in a battle that a lot of conservatives think needs to be fought," says Republican strategist Vin Weber, who characterizes the governor's campaign against New Jersey public employees as a "proxy war" that could set the stage for a confrontation over entitlement reform in Congress.

Under Christie's direction, New Jersey has become the country's most visible laboratory for sweeping austerity measures as a response to pervasive budget shortfalls. Last spring, in what felt like an overnight blitz, he cut hundreds of millions in aid to public schools and municipalities—blindsiding the weak-kneed Democratic legislature into submission. Although dismantling social services has long been a feature of the Republican Party platform, that it could be so fully realized in a traditionally liberal stronghold—where public employees and labor unions are thought to wield much influence—shifts the boundaries of possibility for what conservatives can accomplish nationwide.

Remarkably, Christie's aggressive reforms have not damaged his popularity. Ten months after launching the most far-reaching campaign against sacred-cow expenditures in state history, he is viewed favorably by about half of New Jerseyans. "You can cut spending, you can balance a budget without tax increases, you can make hard choices," Christie said recently on *Meet the Press*, "and not only survive politically but thrive politically." His success is also partly a result of succinct, forceful messaging that repeatedly emphasizes the supposedly dire urgency of reform. "If we continue to allow a minority group of union leaders to define for us our standard of living," Christie warned ominously in May, "then we are bound to be Greece."

By insisting that calamity is imminent, Christie has been able to control the narrative such that those who receive state outlays must explain why they are entitled to taxpayer dollars—a burden of proof that predictably falls disproportionately on the disabled, the destitute and even those who rely on the government for nourishment. At Christie's behest, programs that provided poor children with breakfast at school have been defunded, one of the most jarring examples of his platform's real-life ramifications.

And New Jersey Democrats, encumbered by leadership disputes, have been unable to offer a coherent alternative. "Those of us in the legislature have not done a very good job of explaining what really happened here," says State Senator Loretta Weinberg, the Democratic nominee for lieutenant governor in 2009.

This disarray has allowed Christie to routinely castigate

Michael Tracey is a freelance writer and a fall 2010 Nation *intern.*

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state programs without apparent regard for the thousands who rely on them to fulfill basic needs. From pre-kindergarten programs to maintaining state parks, even the most benign public services have become politicized as they fall victim to the "wrecking ball." Suburban communities, once happily isolated from political wrangling in Trenton, have been forced to eliminate their schools' music and sports programs; facilities for the mentally ill are closing down; professors at state universities are being furloughed. Every social program in New Jersey is now viewed in the context of how it affects the budget—and whatever benefit it may once have conferred takes a back seat.

Poor, urban (and thereby Democratic) areas like Newark, Camden and Trenton—which lack a robust property tax base and depend deeply on state aid—have sustained the heaviest losses. In Camden, the most dangerous city in the country, nearly half the police force will be fired if administrators cannot negotiate new contracts; in Trenton, another 111 officers are at risk for termination. Gang members in Newark roam the streets with T-shirts celebrating the date of scheduled police layoffs. In the interest of closing the budget gap, New Jersey's cities may soon descend into chaos.

Part of Christie's strategy in rationalizing such breathtaking cuts has been to cast organized labor, especially the state teachers' union, as a greedy impediment to reform. "He's succeeded in tainting us as the problem," says Steve Wollmer, communications director of the New Jersey Education Association (NJEA), which Christie has regularly berated. "Every chance he gets, he slams us, he smears us, he lies about us. He's done it since he took office." When James O'Keefe, the discredited conservative videographer, surreptitiously recorded teachers at an NJEA conference singing "Let's have a whiskey and get a little misty. Join me now and slander Chris Christie!" the governor eagerly piled on. "This is what I've been talking about," he said. "The arrogance, the greed, the self-interest, the lack of introspection, the lack of standards." Christie falsely claimed that union leaders were depicted in the video, and failed to mention that the teachers on tape had been plied with drink.

His penchant for chastising the NJEA at all costs is a consistent trend: Bret Schundler, Christie's former education commissioner, testified to the state assembly that the governor turned down a compromise with the union that would have brought the state millions in federal education funding because "it was intolerable for him to be perceived as giving in to the NJEA," adding that Christie was especially concerned about how the compromise might play on local talk-radio.

"Chris is a very sharp politician," says former Democratic Governor Richard Codey. "He's created a bogeyman out of the teachers and the unions to divert your attention from the fact that he's cut your aid."

A few weeks later, the governor helped orchestrate a $100 million matching donation from Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg to the blighted Newark school system. Conveniently for Christie, the money deflected scrutiny from the structural inequities that had doomed Newark in the first place—and which his cuts have exacerbated. Hundreds of district employees were laid off in the months before the donation was announced, and Christie is still inexplicably delaying construction of a new state-of-the-art high school in the city's West Ward. "He giveth with one hand," Newark Councilman Ronald Rice says of the governor, "and he taketh away with the other."

But all the same, Christie has managed to christen himself as a tireless champion of education reform, bolstering his national profile among conservatives. He extended a job offer to *Waiting for Superman* heroine and former Washington, DC, Schools Chancellor Michelle Rhee and has actively promoted the controversial documentary. In May, the American Federation for Children, a leading "school choice" advocacy organization, hosted Christie as the keynote speaker at its annual summit.

Despite Zuckerberg's proclamation that Christie is a "great leader," and despite Newark Mayor Cory Booker's assurances that the donation will be used for public purposes only, Christie's critics allege that he's put New Jersey on the path to outright privatization. "His goal is to demonize and defund public schools," says Wollmer, "en route to getting vouchers."

Shrewdly, Christie has created the impression that money-sucking public schools are to blame for New Jersey's property tax burden—long decried as the highest in the country. But he forgoes mentioning that New Jersey also ranks forty-fifth in the amount of funding its schools receive from state aid, and with Christie's cuts, the situation can only worsen. Weinberg, Codey, Rice and other Democratic critics predict that in the next fiscal year, municipalities will be forced to fill the void left by the loss of state aid by *increasing* property taxes—just what Christie had ostensibly sought to avoid. "People are going to be very upset with this governor very soon," Wollmer continued. "Or they're going to see their public schools gutted. Either way, that's not what they voted for."

Education is only one front in Christie's wholesale effort to roll back progressive policy in New Jersey. In April he revoked the state global-warming fund of its entire $65 million allocation; in July he eliminated all $7.5 million in taxpayer support for women's health services, forcing several Planned Parenthood facilities to close. And Christie infamously rebuked the Obama administration by canceling construction of a tunnel into Manhattan that had already been partly paid for by the federal government. All this may delight conservative activists, but New Jersey nevertheless remains a blue state—and the vexing impact of Christie's cuts may soon deflate his appeal at home.

As he ponders his electoral prospects, the consequences of Christie's budget will become tangible: class size will increase in schools, public employees will lose their jobs and infrastructure will continue to decay. Christie's supporters argue that these immediate hardships are necessary for long-term fiscal solvency. "If you break your arm, you have to endure some pain before it heals," says Brian Hackett, chair of the Monroe Township Republicans. But the pain for many in New Jersey is unlikely to subside. Instead, while millionaires enjoy fresh tax cuts, the most vulnerable will be asked for further sacrifice. Anything, of course, to close the deficit. ■

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A Kidnapping's Aftermath

After *New York Times* reporter David Rohde's escape, Taliban factions turned on one another.

by ARAM ROSTON

On a Friday night in June 2009, *New York Times* reporter David Rohde and his translator made a dramatic escape from captivity in Pakistan, climbing over a wall while their Afghan Taliban guards slept. Rohde wore sandals and a traditional *salwar kameez*, and he had a long beard, grown during his seven-month imprisonment. The two men walked in the darkness of the city, a Taliban ministate, past mud-brick huts, and found their way to a Pakistani military base just minutes away.

CHARLES KRUPA/AP

Rohde had been a prisoner shared by two competing groups of Taliban fighters, both of which appear to have held him not as a political or military tool in their operations against the US and Afghan governments but for his monetary value as a hostage.

Rohde's escape was an unexpectedly joyous ending to a harrowing episode for him, his wife, his colleagues and friends. But it was by no means the end of the story.

An Afghan who is well acquainted with several of the participants in the kidnapping has provided *The Nation* and the Investigative Fund at The Nation Institute with new details about the perpetrators, as well as new information about what happened after Rohde's escape. This source's account reveals how Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) serves as an arbiter for the various Taliban groups that compete with one another for influence, loot and profits. According to the source, the ISI, acting on behalf of one Taliban faction, took two of Rohde's guards into custody to interrogate them about how he escaped. Then, despite its knowledge of the men's role in the kidnapping, the ISI simply set them free.

Though this new information merely lends more substance to already strong suspicions about the ISI's close relationship with the Taliban, it's still an explosive allegation: rather than cooperating with US authorities, Pakistan's intelligence agency essentially became an accessory after the fact to Rohde's kidnapping.

The saga began on November 10, 2008, when Rohde, researching a book about Afghanistan, was driven to Logar province to meet a Taliban commander with the nom de guerre Abu Tayyeb. Rohde was seized on a stretch of road by gunmen in a well-practiced maneuver and taken into the custody of a heavy-set Taliban leader who introduced himself as Mullah Atiqullah, as Rohde details in his soon-to-be-released book, *A Rope and a Prayer*, which he wrote with his wife, Kristen Mulvihill.

In the months to come, Rohde would learn that Mullah Atiqullah and Abu Tayyeb, whom he had intended to interview, were the same person.

The real name of Rohde's kidnapper, not reported until now, was Haji Najibullah (Haji, of course, is the honorific for those who have made the pilgrimage to Mecca). Najibullah was an ambitious Taliban commander in his 30s, with a swelling reputation. He had made his bones as an aide to the legendary one-legged Taliban commander Mullah Dadullah Lang. Though Dadullah is not a household name in the United States, he certainly is in Afghanistan. One US Army general called him the Taliban's "functional leader," and noted Taliban expert Ahmed Rashid has called him "the most ruthless Taliban commander after 9/11." Dadullah was killed in a US attack in 2007. Najibullah would be remembered in Taliban circles as one of his minor protégés.

After capturing Rohde, Najibullah quickly saw dollar signs. Rohde, in his forthcoming book, explains how he made a drastic mistake his second night in captivity: desperate to stay alive, he told Najibullah that he could be traded for "prisoners and millions of dollars." Realizing that he might have to hold on to Rohde for a long time to shake loose real money in ransom, Najibullah brought him to Pakistan, where the American reporter, his translator and his driver were placed in the custody of the Haqqani network.

The Haqqanis, a mujahedeen clan from Khost province, may be some of the most effective commanders battling US forces. They deploy terrorist tactics—waves of well-trained attackers wearing explosive vests deployed in operations such as the assault on the Kabul guesthouses, the assassination attempt against Afghan President Hamid Karzai and a series of large-scale actions against US combat outposts on the border near Pakistan.

The Haqqanis were even more effective against the Soviets in the 1980s, when they worked closely with the CIA. The late former Congressman Charles Wilson famously referred to Jalaluddin Haqqani back then as "goodness personified." A former agency official who used to know Jalaluddin said, "I really regret the fact that we are tangling with him, because he is not a guy to fuck around with."

When the United States invaded Afghanistan, the Haqqanis sided with the Taliban, not Karzai. By 2002 the Haqqanis were almost on the ropes. Jalaluddin was injured in a US bombing raid. So the younger generation took over. Jalaluddin's son Siraj, trained like his father in the twin arts of paramilitary warfare and charismatic religious leadership, was now in charge.

The Haqqanis are also known to live well. "They do business," *The Nation*'s source said. "They've done business for years.

Aram Roston, a freelance journalist, is the winner of the 2010 Daniel Pearl Award for Outstanding International Investigative Reporting. He is the author of The Man Who Pushed America to War. *Research support for this article was provided by the Investigative Fund at The Nation Institute.*

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They are involved in war, but if they find some business opportunity, they do it. They like buying houses and selling them and stuff like that. Now they have trucks and trucking equipment in Peshawar."

Rohde's kidnapping was in essence a business opportunity. Najibullah, the young commander who first captured Rohde, was not a subordinate of the Haqqanis; but by bringing Rohde to them, he would build up his reputation with the clan, giving him a safe base from which to conduct negotiations. Najibullah and his men brought Rohde across Afghanistan's border to the Haqqanis to make it easier to hold him for an extended period, according to the source familiar with the kidnapping. In Pakistan, they figured, they were safe from American rescue efforts, since they understood that the Haqqanis had the protection of the ISI.

Many experts say that the Haqqanis are supported by the ISI today, just as they have been for decades. The network has "been on the payroll of Pakistan's ISI since the 1970s, and the ISI still allows them to operate freely," in the words of Ahmed Rashid.

The ISI denies this. "That is not true," a senior ISI official told *The Nation*. He spoke on behalf of the agency but insisted on anonymity. "We have attacked Haqqani a number of times. Right now we are not conducting operations against him because primarily we are busy with the TPP [Pakistani Taliban, as opposed to the Afghan Taliban] in South Waziristan, and we do not have the wherewithal to conduct operations against both of them."

Still, even the US government is skeptical of Pakistan's denials. Indeed, this past summer Gen. David Petraeus underlined the difficulty in "trying to assess what the ISI is doing…in contacts with the Haqqani network or the Afghan Taliban."

To arbitrate the dispute about the kidnapping, the Haqqanis turned to the Pakistani intelligence service (ISI).

The initial ransom requests issued by Rohde's kidnappers were wildly aggressive. For Rohde's release, the Haqqanis wanted $25 million, and they wanted prisoners released from Guantánamo. Then it was $15 million and prisoners released from Pul-i-Charkhi prison near Kabul. Then $8 million.

The Nation's Afghan source said that guarding Rohde was a task shared by Najibullah and the Haqqanis, who provided the logistical support, housing and a secure environment in which to operate near Afghanistan. With so much money at stake, each faction was mistrustful of the other. Of Rohde's three chief guards, one was a Haqqani loyalist and two were Najibullah's men. So important was this operation to Najibullah that he had his brother Timor Shah act as a full-time guard for Rohde. (These details are corroborated in Rohde's book.)

Not only were the Haqqanis and Najibullah eager to use Rohde for profit but the main Taliban Shura—the head council that oversees the Afghan Taliban—hoped to get involved as well, according to *The Nation*'s source. Afghanistan expert Michael Semple said that has become common in kidnappings. "It is standard practice of Taliban High Command to seek control of kidnapping situations," he told me.

The Taliban often insisted to Rohde that they had noble motives—that he was being held for the cause, not for money. "They told me repeatedly that they were doing this for the jihad," Rohde told me in an interview. "They kept telling me that it wasn't about them getting rich themselves. But given the size of the ransom they were demanding, I find that hard to believe."

Throughout his captivity, Rohde was well aware of the likely connections between the ISI and the Haqqanis who held him, though he said no ISI agents made themselves known during his captivity. "I didn't witness any direct contact between the ISI and the Haqqanis." That said, he was living proof, in a sense, that Pakistani authorities gave the Haqqanis full freedom to do as they liked. "What I did see," he emphasized, "was that Pakistan forces never came off their bases, and the Haqqanis were allowed to operate their own Taliban ministate in North Waziristan."

Meanwhile, the Pakistani government stuck to the fiction, until late in Rohde's captivity on its soil, that it believed he wasn't being held in Pakistan. Rohde said his wife was repeatedly told by Pakistani officials that he was being held in Afghanistan.

The FBI, the CIA and the *New York Times* worked quietly behind the scenes to secure Rohde's release, believing that news of his kidnapping could derail their efforts if it became public. But there was much confusion about the circumstances of the kidnapping, both in the United States and in the Taliban camps, before and after his escape.

During the kidnapping, one of the "security consultants" on the case was Duane "Dewey" Clarridge. Clarridge, 78, has a stormy past. Indicted for perjury in the Iran/Contra case in 1991, he was pardoned a year later by the first President Bush. Then Clarridge became an eager supporter of the discredited Iraqi exile Ahmad Chalabi.

Clarridge boasted to a small group of people that he had a network of sources with rock-solid information about the kidnapping. While Rohde was in captivity, Clarridge circulated information that some of Rohde's guards were Chechens, that Rohde had been separated from his driver and translator, and that he was held in a specific border village. Many of those claims turn out to have been erroneous, contradicted not just by *The Nation*'s source but also by Rohde in his book.

Later, there were news reports that Rohde's escape had been engineered somehow by the people Clarridge claimed to be working with. ABC News reported that a security firm bribed Taliban guards, and that the *Times* "used a controversial former CIA official, Duane 'Dewey' Claridge [*sic*], to help plot the escape of Rohde." That theory, though, is contradicted by Rohde, who believes no guards were bribed, as well as by *The Nation*'s source. (The claims that his escape was engineered are highly implausible anyway, since it was Rohde's decision, and his translator's, to escape that night, and they had no help or contacts.)

Clarridge declined to comment for this article.

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In Pakistan, Rohde's escape was devastating for the Taliban. Not only had they lost their prize prisoner but the loss caused the Haqqanis and Najibullah to turn on each other. They were both convinced, in a case of mirror imaging, that the other one must have released Rohde as part of a secret arrangement in which they kept the ransom money for themselves. Instead of suspecting incompetence on the part of the guards, they believed someone was cheating and getting rich.

"There was a big problem between Siraj [Haqqani] and Najibullah," the source familiar with the kidnappers told me. "A huge issue. Siraj was blaming Najibullah, that he's the one who took money from the Americans and let the guy go. And [Najibullah] was blaming him, that he did it, because it was his compound."

Even the Taliban Shura in Quetta got involved, the source said. They "thought that Siraj kept the money."

Semple, the Afghanistan expert, also heard about the crisis that hit the Taliban after Rohde's escape. "There was a witch hunt," he said, "to see who might have taken the money."

To arbitrate the dispute about the kidnapping, the Haqqanis turned to the Pakistan government's intelligence service, according to *The Nation*'s source. Siraj, the source said, turned over the two guards affiliated with Najibullah to the ISI for questioning. "One of them," the source said, "was Najib's brother Timor Shah."

The guards were allegedly interrogated fiercely and tortured by the ISI. The interrogators demanded to know exactly how Rohde had escaped. Who had let him go, and why? Were the men paid a ransom they had not shared? In other words, the ISI was making sure that the relations between the Taliban factions weren't destroyed by anyone's betrayal.

Once the ISI was convinced that there had been no bribes and no ransom, Rohde's guards were set free. Despite their role in the kidnapping, they were not charged in court or handed over to the Americans. After more than a month in custody, they were let go.

I asked Rohde for his reaction to this information. "It's very disturbing that the Pakistani authorities would not keep in custody people that were involved in my kidnapping," he said. "If they had two of my guards in their custody and then released them, that seems to fit a broader pattern of the ISI sheltering the Taliban."

The senior ISI official who spoke with *The Nation* would neither confirm nor deny the report. "I don't know about it. I haven't heard about it," he said.

As this case shows, the corruption and profiteering that characterize the Karzai government, propped up by the United States, are often mirrored in the financial dealings of America's fractious enemies, who are propped up by Pakistan.

As Semple pointed out, "We need to think of Waziristan as this tribal criminal enterprise masking as jihad."

The Nation's source put it this way: "There is a lot of money. You have no idea how fragile things are within the Taliban. This is not a small war they are fighting. They are fighting over power. The money goes to whoever has the power." ■

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Protest to Power in the Philippines

For years, Walden Bello fought the Marcos dictatorship. Now he's a member of Congress.

by ROBIN BROAD AND JOHN CAVANAGH

Twenty-nine years ago, at the height of the bloody Marcos dictatorship in the Philippines, then–first lady Imelda Marcos was an honored guest at a piano concert at the Kennedy Center in Washington. During a break in the program, Walden Bello, a leader of the anti-Marcos activists in the United States, slipped down to the front of the auditorium with a handful of others and unfurled a banner reading DOWN WITH THE MARCOS DICTATORSHIP. Walden pointed up at Imelda Marcos, sitting beside Van Cliburn, and shouted, "There is a fascist in the house!" The police were called. A chase around the orchestra seats ensued and, eventually, the police hauled Walden and the others off in handcuffs.

PAT ROQUE/AP

Fast-forward to July 23 of this year: Walden and Imelda, newly elected members of the Philippine Congress, met once more, this time in a plush Manila hotel for the inaugural gathering of the new majority coalition, of which they are both members. "She walked right over to the table where I was sitting," Walden told us two days later in Manila. "The Kennedy Center incident flashed through my head, but I looked up and I saw an old woman [she is 81], and I thought, she is almost blind and doesn't know who I am." So he decided simply to shake her hand. Perhaps even stranger, the man convening the coalition meeting was the new Philippine president, Benigno "Noynoy" Aquino, the son of the politician whose 1983 assassination was widely believed to have been sanctioned by Imelda's husband, President Ferdinand Marcos. That killing unleashed the "People Power" revolution, which brought millions onto the streets, exiled the Marcoses to Hawaii and ushered Noynoy's mother, Cory Aquino, to power in 1986.

Walden invited us to be his guests at Noynoy Aquino's first presidential State of the Nation address, on July 26. We were driven down Commonwealth Avenue in Walden's Congressional car to the Congress, where the speech would be delivered. Alongside us, thousands of protesters, many of them allies of Walden, carried colorful banners and effigies of President Aquino. Indeed, one of the protesting groups, the Freedom from Debt Coalition, boasted Walden as its president. In this country of militant activists, it was a significant statement of the "space" the new administration commands that no one burned an effigy of President Aquino. Moreover, the protests paused during the speech so that the activists could listen by radio. Similar to Americans' reaction in the weeks after Barack Obama's inauguration in 2009, most progressives in the Philippines want to give their new president a chance.

Walden has a slight build and looks younger than his 65 years. Four decades ago he and tens of thousands of bright young Filipinos at the best universities gave up dreams of conventional careers and joined poor farmers to create a vast network of organizations to fight what they called the "US-Marcos dictatorship" and its egregious human rights abuses. (We were active in a vibrant US support movement, Robin having first lived in the Philippines in 1977.) Many were communists, all were nationalists and thousands of them formed an armed peasant movement in the rural areas, the New People's Army, which aimed to follow the example of Mao in China and take power by force.

Walden was in the United States for graduate studies, and after finishing a PhD at Princeton in 1975, he helped build the anti-Marcos movement from the United States as a scholar and activist. He also played a central role in the high-profile fight to remove from the Philippines two of the largest US overseas military bases, which had been key staging areas during the Vietnam War. In 1991 the Philippine Senate finally voted to remove the bases, but there is continuing controversy in the country over roughly 500 US troops in the southern Philippines who provide training to the Philippine military in the fight against armed groups with alleged ties to Al Qaeda. In the 1990s Walden became a leader of the broader anti–corporate globalization movement and helped spark protests around the world against the World Bank and the World Trade Organization. Throughout this period he was a frequent contributor to *The Nation* (a June 2, 2008, article, "Manufacturing a Food Crisis," led to his 2009 book, *The Food Wars*).

During his anti-Marcos activist years, Walden became a member of the National Democratic Front and the Communist Party of the Philippines. In the late 1980s, disillusioned with the party because of its inflexibility and internal purges, he left it. Twelve years ago Walden and many others concluded that progressive change in their country would not come through armed struggle, and they joined several other political groups to form a legal party, Akbayan: Citizens' Action Party, to contend for power in the electoral arena. They had been given an opening by President Cory Aquino in 1987, when her government designated a number of Congressional seats to be reserved for representatives of the "poor and marginalized" segments of society. Today when you vote in a Philippine election, you cast two votes for Congress: one for the representative of your geographical

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district and one from the list of smaller parties. Walden was elected to the previous Congress, and Akbayan received more than 1 million votes in the May 2010 elections. This gave the party two seats, including a second term for Walden.

After the guards saluted our car and whisked us through the gates of Congress, we were led up to Walden's office by a young staff member. On the way, we watched presidential security officers sweeping the building with bomb-sniffing German shepherds. Seven staff members were crowded into a front room, with Walden's office in the back. The strong smell of fresh paint permeated the office.

Walden and his staff were busy in the weeks leading up to the State of the Nation address fighting two high-profile cases against the corruption that is so pervasive in Philippine politics. Both placed Walden on the front pages of the dailies. First, he introduced a Congressional resolution to impeach the country's ombudsman. The charge: the ombudsman had failed to pursue several prominent cases of corruption against the former president, Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo (she was also elected to Congress in 2010, some say to acquire the immunity that goes with the office).

The second involved Arroyo's son, Mikey, who had just been named a member of Congress representing the party of the security guards and tricycle drivers under the same party-list system that got Walden elected. Yet Mikey Arroyo is a wealthy former Congressman, not a representative of poor drivers. Walden and his party filed a motion with the Supreme Court requesting that Mikey Arroyo be denied his seat, since it clearly violated the law governing party-list candidates.

On the day of the State of the Nation address, Walden's office was focused on positioning him as the point man in Congress for steering the Philippines on an alternative economic path, a shift from free-market fundamentalism to a much more domestic-oriented, government-led strategy based on land and income redistribution that would favor workers, farmers and small businesspeople, the backbone of this society. A staff member in her 20s pulled Walden over to her computer so he could edit a press release that called on President Aquino to "replace Arroyo-nomics with Reform Economics."

The press release complete, we asked Walden what the biggest change in his life was in shifting from scholar-activist to member of Congress. "I had to adjust," he said. "First, on the level of discourse. As a scholar-activist you are analytical. In Congress you need to be more populist. And in this country people respond to the liberal democratic language of fairness, and separation of powers, and serving the people. In addition, as an activist you call for large-scale change like the cancellation of all foreign debts. Here, in a Congress filled with traditional politicians, you won't win that. So you can call for debt cancellation in privileged speeches on the floor of Congress, but to win legislatively you need to narrow the target and fight for things where popular outrage will push the members to act."

Walden continued, "The other big shift is that as a party member of Akbayan I am taking my lead from the party, and coordinating closely with them and with the staff of the other Akbayan Congressperson and with my own staff. It works well, but there are a lot of meetings." This was not alien terrain for Walden; it built on expertise he developed during his anti-Marcos activism while in exile. "My first real experience with Congressional work was in the United States, when we were trying to cut off aid to Marcos," he said.

We asked Walden what his main accomplishments were during his past year in Congress. He talked about two. The first involved the aftermath of the infamous election-related massacre of fifty-seven people, including thirty-two journalists, by a well-entrenched clan in the southern Philippines in late 2009 (the Committee to Protect Journalists judged this to be the deadliest attack on journalists in the organization's history). In its aftermath, President Arroyo declared sweeping martial law in the province where the massacre was carried out, Maguindanao, which Walden and others opposed as an illegal attempt to manipulate the crisis to solidify her rule. Walden and his allies were outspoken, and Arroyo backed down. Another key fight involved attempts by a member of Congress to revive a mothballed nuclear power plant built in the 1980s near an earthquake fault and several active volcanoes. Walden had been a US-based leader of the original fight to shut the plant down before it could start operations. Decades later, he used his technical and economic expertise to make the case successfully to keep it closed.

Bello is trying to steer his country away from free-market fundamentalism to a government-led strategy based on income redistribution.

Moments before the presidential address, Walden's staff reminded him that he needed to change into his *barong tagalog*, a translucent formal shirt woven of pineapple fiber and embroidered with elegant designs. He clearly would have preferred not to change, but he did as he was told.

The State of the Nation was a spectacle, in part because it doubles as the fashion event of the year. We sat in the gallery with about 1,000 other invited guests, including the diplomatic corps, two former presidents, the cabinet and members of the elite. Most of the men wore a *barong tagalog*; many of the women wore the floor-length *terno* dress with puffed-up sleeves made famous by Imelda years ago.

On the floor below us were roughly 250 members of Congress and twenty-one senators, with the conspicuous absence of former President Arroyo and Mikey. Arroyo had conveniently left the country the night before, claiming that she needed to be in Hong Kong at her husband's side as he visited a cardiologist. The more likely reason was that President Aquino was about to lambaste her and her administration as having bankrupted the nation with extravagant spending.

Up on the dais beneath a huge Philippine flag sat the new Senate president, Juan Ponce Enrile, a key Marcos ally who had defected at the last minute to help Cory Aquino take power

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in 1986. Beside him sat the new House speaker, a popular consensus-builder who engineered the ruling coalition, which includes Walden, Imelda, several actresses and media personalities, and the world's reigning welterweight boxing champion, Manny Pacquiao. We asked another member of Congress to try to explain this political potpourri. "This is the Philippines," he said with a shrug. "You have the Bushes and Clintons. We have the Marcoses and Aquinos, with a lot more thrown in." For the record, Ferdinand Marcos's son, Bong-Bong, is a senator, and his daughter Imee is a provincial governor; both were on the floor.

Earlier, in his office, Walden had prepared us for Noynoy Aquino's speech: "He will expose the corruption of the previous government, but he won't critique the economic model which has made the Philippines unequal and poor." As Walden predicted, President Aquino laid out a litany of charges of graft and corruption, some eliciting oohs and aahs from those around us, and then he offered a grocery list of proposals. But at a cocktail party after the speech, Walden elaborated on the omissions: "Nothing on land reform, nothing on climate, nothing on debt, nothing on reproductive health, nothing on labor and nothing on the economic model. He does not yet understand that government needs to be a strong, positive force in transforming the Philippine economy into one that guarantees the well-being of the people."

At the cocktail party, Walden introduced us to other members of Congress while gently lobbying them to join the resolution to impeach the ombudsman. We bumped into a prominent leader of President Aquino's ruling Liberal Party, whom we had met a few years before, and he told us more about the July 23 ruling coalition meeting where Walden met Imelda: "At least thirty members of Congress checked in and asked for their payment." "What payment?" we asked. "They simply expected that they would get an envelope with 200,000 pesos [about $4,000] for showing up. Of course, they got nothing from us. This is a new era."

A beaming Filipino-American businessman from California introduced himself, boasting about his telecommunications company and the anti-terrorism work he has done for the past two Philippine administrations. He voiced his intent to work for the return of the US military bases. Thinking this would please Walden, the businessman laughed and said, "A lot of money coming your way, eh, *Manong* [respected elder]?" At that moment, we and Walden were jarred back to the reality that most members of Congress run to get rich from contracts with businessmen and pork-barrel projects.

After the party, we headed back to Walden's office. Soon after we arrived, a short, fast-talking Filipino in an American suit rushed in to see Walden. We learned that he was a boyhood schoolmate who had gone on to work for the Marcoses. After spending five minutes with this man, Walden asked if he would bring us to meet Imelda. We were more than slightly shocked at the idea, but we went along. The friend asked how to introduce us, and we told him that we had worked on development issues in the Philippines since the late 1970s.

We walked into Imelda's office and were told by her staff that she was meeting with a governor from the central Philippines. However, word traveled quickly to Imelda that there were two Americans in the outer office, and within seconds the governor was escorted out and we were in with the wife of the dictator we and Walden and millions of Filipinos had worked for decades to dethrone.

Imelda embraced our guide and greeted us with her infamous charm. Still regal in a deep purple *terno* with matching shoes (sturdy pumps, for the record), she looked younger than 81. "I just turned 18," she flirted. She guided us to an elaborate spread of cheese, fruit and charcuterie and seated us beneath a portrait of her late husband. We asked her what it felt like to be back in power, and to have her son as a senator and a daughter as a governor. This was enough to launch her into a monologue filled with her version of history, philosophy, astrology and her lifelong campaign to spread "the truth, the good and the beautiful."

Imelda is a master of memorized sound bites. For us, much of her comments revolved around how her many detractors have been proved wrong by history and how she is committed to building a new chapter of history. She told us about a 2009 issue of *Newsweek* that labeled her, along with Genghis Khan, one of the eleven greediest people of all time. "I told my friends, 'I plead guilty as charged. I am greedy in the spread of truth, of the good and of beauty.'" She regaled us with tales of her meetings with world leaders such as Muammar el-Qaddafi, Kim Il-sung and Chairman Mao. She defended her husband's tough measures: "Being president is not a popularity contest. If it were, Coca-Cola would be president."

Some forty-five minutes later, we were informed that Walden was waiting for us down in the lobby of the Congress building, and we tried to say our goodbyes. Imelda towered over us as photos were taken, and she walked us to a three-dimensional portrait of her husband. "This was taken from me during the legal cases against our wealth," she said with a flourish of melodrama, "but I got it back. It is made from pearls." We again tried to make our exit, but, following us into the hall, she launched into her plans to bring renewable energy to the country. We began to wonder about the source of her seemingly boundless energy. Finally, with a bottle of "Imelda Marcos" wine in hand, we retreated to Walden's car.

Still somewhat in shock as we rode in a downpour, we showed Walden the bottle of wine with a photo of a much younger Imelda on the label. "You better be careful," he warned in jest. "It might be poison."

A week later, Walden gave a speech on the floor of Congress in which he accused the administration of former President Arroyo of "orgiastic compensation, brazen manipulation of government agencies and funds for political purposes, and massive waste of the people's money." He invoked colorful imagery of pigs and crocodiles. Several of Arroyo's Congressional allies immediately asked that Walden be brought before the House Ethics Committee; some called for his suspension from Congress. For better or worse, the brutal honesty and the theater that Walden brought to his work against the Marcos dictatorship has not flagged over the intervening decades—regardless of the venue. ■

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Books & the Arts.

Between Hitler and Stalin

by SAMUEL MOYN

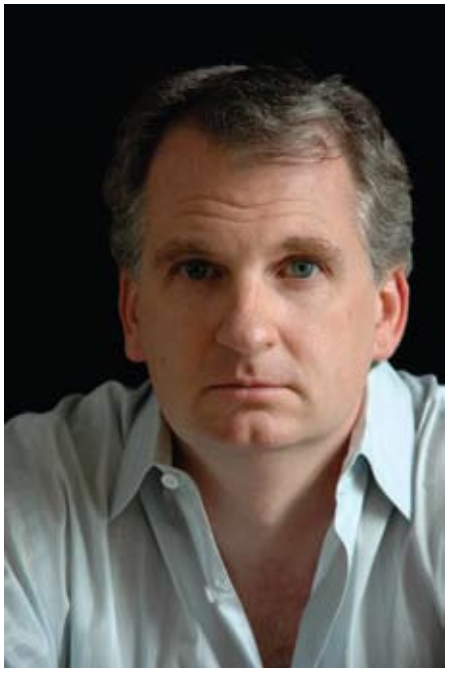
In mid-April 1945 American GIs entered Buchenwald while their British compatriots marched, horrified, into Bergen-Belsen. There they found scenes of unimaginable suffering, men of bones and skin standing, somehow, on spindly legs, amid piles of emaciated corpses. In those dark days at Buchenwald, Gen. Dwight Eisenhower postponed the burial of the dead so that journalists could be brought to the scene to tell the world what the fight had been about. Even as thousands of typhus-stricken survivors died, witnesses to a liberation that came too late for them, Edward R. Murrow filed reports and Margaret Bourke-White made chilling photographs that documented what must have seemed the nether pole of human depravity, the worst an inhuman regime could achieve. A picture of evil was set; yet that picture, it has long been clear, was distorted and mistaken.

A little over a year ago, as he put the finishing touches on his important new work of history, *Bloodlands*, Timothy Snyder published a much remarked-upon piece in *The New York Review of Books* titled—somewhat portentously—"The Holocaust: The Ignored Reality." As in the finished volume, Snyder offered a powerful reminder that the true killing fields of the Holocaust were in German-occupied territories in the east, where first with mass shootings and then at killing centers like the hellish Treblinka the Jews were put to death as Jews—most of them immediately, without staying the night. "The fate of the concentration camp inmates, horrible though it was, is distinct from that of those many millions who were gassed, shot, or starved," Snyder writes in his book. "American and British forces," he continues, "saw *none* of the major killing sites."

But everybody, more or less, knew that much. A half-century ago Raul Hilberg published the first edition of his classic *The Destruction of the European Jews*, in which he found fault with "the constant emphasis" in the popular and scholarly perception of the war on "'concentration camps,' often including the epitomization of Dachau and Buchenwald but rarely embracing any mention of Auschwitz, let alone the faraway camps of Treblinka and Sobibór or Belzec." He was crying in the wilderness, but a few years later a potboiler with the title *Treblinka* sold hundreds of thousands of copies in Western Europe and the United States, finally putting that dastardly name into wide circulation. Still, perhaps Hilberg's distinction needs to be reasserted, and Snyder—a walking encyclopedia of arresting facts and conclusive figures—has done so better than anyone.

In his article Snyder further claimed that Auschwitz, a concentration and labor facility that incorporated a death camp, Birkenau, is now so well-known because it allowed survival, both of non-Jews and Jews, perhaps 100,000 people (by comparison, fewer than 100 survived Treblinka, a "pure" death facility). True, but Auschwitz is also renowned as a site of Jew-killing, not simply for the *Arbeit macht frei* that made it far preferable to Treblinka's horrors, on average. Thanks to the decades of research and memorialization that have made the Holocaust so familiar, and Auschwitz iconic, it is now the concentration camps, not the extermination camps, that are "ignored." If you ask anybody in the street what happened at the concentration camps, they will tell you—wrongly—that the Nazis put the Jews to death in them. Whereas Buchenwald once left Treblinka in the shadows, the reverse is now closer to the truth.

It turns out, then, that much of what Snyder calls "the ignored reality" of the Holocaust is tolerably well-known; by appealing to it to justify his new project, he is really gathering momentum for a rather different and essentially separate historical undertaking. His goal is to connect the true geography, and the detailed unfolding, of the Holocaust to a wide variety of other crimes, perpetrated both by the Nazis and the Soviet Union, in what he dubs a "history of political mass murder." Though it took many years for the Holocaust even to be named as a separate event, it has also been decades since historians began to call for "historicizing" it, by which they meant finding the proper framework for explaining it, so that it is no longer a mysterious black box into which explanation cannot intrude. In *Bloodlands* Snyder locates the Holocaust alongside other atrocities in an all-embracing single scheme. And unlike his claim that the Holocaust's grim reality is poorly known, his attempt to link it to a syndrome of political killing endorsed by Adolf Hitler and Joseph Stalin is new and compelling, at least in many of its specifics.



INE GUNDERSVEEN

Timothy Snyder

Bloodlands
Europe Between Hitler and Stalin.
By Timothy Snyder.
Basic. 524 pp. $29.95.

Snyder is perhaps the most talented younger historian of modern Europe working today. Astonishingly prolific, he grounds his work in authoritative mastery of the facts, mining tomes of information in multiple languages and brilliantly synthesizing his findings. At the very least, *Bloodlands* is valuable for its astounding narrative integration of a gruesome era of European history. Following in the footsteps of his mentors, Timothy Garton Ash and Tony Judt, Snyder adopts an anti-

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totalitarian perspective. (In the depths of his terminal illness, Judt, thanks to Snyder's selfless assistance, completed what will be his posthumous intellectual history of Europe in the twentieth century.) The upshot of this perspective is that Snyder generally avoids high-flown theoretical propositions in order to give individuals their due, even if just to record their agony and demise. A preternaturally gifted prose stylist, he strives for a moral urgency appropriate to his depressing topics, and he rarely succumbs to bathos.

The narrative of Snyder's book does offer an argument: political atrocity in the era had a highly specific geography, the "bloodlands" of its title, which stretched from central Poland to western Russia, including Ukraine and the Baltic regions. There, Snyder calculates, 14 million people—not including the fighting soldiers who trampled the same ground—lost their lives in an extended paroxysm of state-organized violence. If you were a victim, it was most likely because you were living in the wrong place, not just at the wrong time.

Polish suffering was a common project for the Nazi and Soviet killing campaigns.

By choosing a geographical approach to how death undid so many "between Hitler and Stalin," Snyder courts two contending risks. One is that he is simply spelling out on the ground the familiar thesis that totalitarian regimes and despots are uniquely evil. Is it any surprise that in the zone where such titans clashed, and the most massive war in human history took place, there was a lot of civilian carnage? A second risk is that a geographical focus could dislodge the wide variety of explanations historians have offered to put the Holocaust in some sort of context, ones focusing, for example, on the circumstances of the war, notably its economics, and food policy behind the lines, or on the imperial aspirations of the contenders in a common space. Snyder avoids the second risk by integrating many of the existing arguments into his own.

The litany of death begins with three bloodcurdling chapters on Soviet policy in the 1930s. As Snyder usefully points out, Stalin killed civilians in peacetime and within his empire, whereas Hitler by and large waited until the war to conduct his malfeasance, and did so on the periphery of newly conquered territory. Recently another historian, Norman Naimark, discussed under the heading *Stalin's Genocides* the bloody episodes of Stalin's peacetime reign, especially the policy-driven Ukrainian famine of 1933 and the campaigns against kulaks (landowning peasant farmers) and other political enemies that culminated in the so-called Great Terror a few years later. But as Snyder points out, "historians who discuss genocide find themselves answering the question as to whether a given event qualifies, and so classifying rather than explaining." Snyder, by contrast, is right to want an explanation, and he is at pains to demonstrate that the sickening death toll depended first of all on geography.

His approach works particularly well for the Ukrainian famine, especially since Hitler's expansionist racial utopia would come to rely on Ukraine as its "bread basket." Snyder also emphasizes the "national terror" Stalin visited on Eastern European elites; after all, targeting Polish elites—in Soviet Belarus and Ukraine before Poland itself was gobbled up—was a project to be joined with gusto by Hitler in due time. Snyder's attitude toward the Gulag is much the same as toward Auschwitz: it is too well-known. The Gulag was tough to endure, although when the civilian death toll mounted obscenely in the Soviet Union it was not in its camps but in collectivization zones and during campaigns of political terror that disproportionately targeted Eastern Europeans (and Poles especially). As Snyder notes disquietingly, "it was Stalin's Soviet Union that undertook the first shooting campaigns of internal national enemies."

Originally a Poland specialist, Snyder has made a valuable contribution with his identification of what he calls "Molotov-Ribbentrop Europe." He has in mind the era between the dismemberment of Poland by Germany and the Soviet Union in 1939 and the Nazi invasion of its erstwhile ally in 1941, and has named it appropriately enough after the gash torn down the center of Poland by the Nazi and Soviet foreign ministers in order to divide the spoils. Polish suffering, most notoriously with the massacre of the Polish officer corps at Katyn but also on the Nazi side of the line, was a common project, Snyder shows. The line also had considerable relevance later, not least because, though the Germans broke the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact with Operation Barbarossa, on one side Jews were to be asphyxiated in camps while on the other they were to be gunned down en masse. Only the Jews of Galicia, with their territory reassigned by the Nazis for administrative reasons from one side of the original line to the other, suffered both fates.

But there is a sticking point. For all the commonalities rooted in geography, and sometimes ideology, between the Nazi and Soviet killing campaigns, the Soviet Union did not perpetrate the Holocaust. Snyder, however, contends that the larger framework of political atrocity in the bloodlands still matters for grasping the Jewish fate, and he bolsters the case by making a series of microscopic arguments as he turns his attention to Operation Barbarossa and beyond.

Snyder attributes Barbarossa to contending imperialisms: whereas the Soviet Union had established its economic realm, Hitler could not do the same without trespassing beyond his share of Polish territory. And in the expanding domains cleared by the Wehrmacht (and the trailing Einsatzgruppen executing Jews as partisans), German plans called for copying the macabre Stalinist food policies that had led to ruin before. According to the Hunger Plan of May 1941, there really was a choice between who would get to eat: the German *Volk* at home or the occupants of newly conquered territory. The latter would have to die by starvation. This did not happen, certainly not comprehensively: an occupation in the midst of war is no easy thing to run according to schemes on paper. But hunger killed millions, most pitilessly in the case of the Soviet POWs, more than 2 million of whom starved to death (the Nazis simply shot half a million more).

When it comes to the Holocaust proper, Snyder's best insight is that zones occupied by the Germans after the Wehrmacht's invasion of the Soviet Union were not a blank slate but were often double scenes of crime, with one deadly occupation and security apparatus giving way to another and with the Jews suffering most. In a fascinating passage, Snyder emphasizes less the murderous collaboration of Poles and Ukrainians in Nazi projects than their victimhood under Hitler and Stalin—or rather, explains the one as a result of the other.

Snyder's point is not only that the Nazis claimed that prior Soviet misrule justified brutal corrective measures. In addition, the Nazis cemented local hatred of the Jews by scapegoating them for communism and the violence it had brought to the area. The Germans could appeal to the prior occupation to confirm "the Nazi worldview," as

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Snyder puts it, in which the Soviet Union was a "Judeo-Bolshevik" regime. "This psychic nazification," Snyder supposes, "would have been much more difficult without the palpable evidence of Soviet atrocities." The pogroms against Jews, after all, "took place where the Soviets had recently arrived and where Soviet power was recently installed, where for the previous months Soviet organs of coercion had organized arrests, executions and deportations. They were a joint production, a Nazi edition of a Soviet text." It is a counterfactual guess, though a plausible one given the scope of the violence.

Snyder's accumulation of facts may not permit any new broad explanation of political murder.

Of course, collaboration happened in zones where no prior occupation had occurred, just as Jews who had never lived under Soviet rule died—in Auschwitz, chiefly. But Snyder is clearly onto something very important.

Snyder is especially interested in Belarus, whose special circumstances he treats as a showcase for his argument, in which geography mattered even more than in the geographically determined bloodlands as a whole. The Belarussian capital of Minsk and its environs, rife with Soviet partisans (many of them Jewish) after the German advance, was the site of the most significant overlap of Nazi and Soviet ideology and activity at the same time. Millions died. Consecutive occupation thus serves to explain both collaboration and resistance.

No matter how convincing, Snyder's reoccupation thesis can be only one piece of a general theory of the bloodlands. Snyder never equates Nazi and Soviet brutality or ideology. His chapter on the death camps is a minor masterpiece of synthesis, though his argument about the supreme relevance of successive occupations necessarily wanes in it: the death camps, including the hell of Treblinka, on which Snyder dwells with especially moving care, were nearly all situated in the lands of the so-called General Government, the new colony comprising Polish zones the Soviets had never seen.

In his portrait of the region, Snyder is keen to emphasize widespread suffering, including interethnic cooperation among Jewish and non-Jewish victims of Nazi rule. Correspondingly, he downplays—albeit in the most thought-provoking way—the indigenous Jew-hatred and local reasons for collaboration that historian Jan Gross has heroically brought to light. "Poles would yell at the trains going by," Snyder pauses to note. "The gesture of a finger across the throat, remembered with loathing by a few Jewish survivors, was meant to communicate to the Jews that they were going to die—though not necessarily that the Poles wished this upon them." I am not sure how comforting this last proviso is—or how true. Ascribing so much significance to the wartime clash of external totalitarian regimes in causing hatred and collaboration slights the earlier sources of regional anti-Semitism, notably during the crisis of 1918–19, when the Judeo-Bolshevik myth took root across the area. Snyder says that "almost none" of the collaborators in Jew-killing helped the Nazis "for ideological reasons." But if earlier and continuing anti-Semitism isn't an ideology, what is?

Snyder underlines the significance of reoccupation and interethnic ties again when he turns to the terrible depredations and the consecutive bouts of resistance in Warsaw, where ghettoized Jews revolted in 1943 against German oppression and Poles (including many Jews) followed suit in 1944. The difference in Snyder's account of the Polish Home Army, which first helped the Jews and then rose up itself, is that this time it is not simply the past Soviet occupation but a prospective one that explains outcomes.

The destruction of Warsaw set the stage, there and elsewhere, for a Soviet conquest as the Nazi regime crumbled, one in which many German civilians were to meet their end in disorganized headlong flight. When the Soviets drove the Nazis back across the bloodlands, Snyder points out, they most frequently ushered in a re-reoccupation. Lands the Soviets had first taken, and had subsequently lost to the Wehrmacht, were theirs again, but to many civilians the apparent opposition was a single experience of victimhood by tag team. Of course, death, which Stalin's victory largely stopped in the very areas he had terrorized before Hitler came, is not the only indignity civilians can suffer. Germans, especially German women, became targets as the Soviets raped without compunction.

In the years of ethnic reordering that was only beginning as the war ended, Germans and others were forcibly relocated. Yet rather than make the ending of the Holocaust the justification for a Soviet new order—even though Stalin's troops had discovered all of its sites, and Soviet journalists like Vasily Grossman had done the most to publicize them—Stalin and his Eastern European allies continued the Jew-hatred. It was not comparable to Hitler's, Snyder acknowledges, though the threat of new mass purges was ever-present. The central truth is that while Hitler started the Holocaust, Stalin ended it. But Soviet anti-Semitism at the level of ideology and policy did make the true history of the bloodlands impossible to perceive later. "No Soviet account of the war," Snyder writes, "could note one of its central facts: German and Soviet occupation together was worse than German occupation alone."

Snyder writes in opposition to those who chalk up the era's violence toward civilians to the pathologies of modernity in a very "abstract way." In *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, Hannah Arendt extrapolated her depiction of the Holocaust from accounts of concentration camps, and Snyder is right to indict her depiction of the totalitarian campaign against the "superfluous man" as quite simply mistaken. His essential contention is that a microscopic view is more productive than a macroscopic one, and if abutting and overlapping totalitarianisms is what occurred, then it was in a very specific region. Put bluntly, better to be a historian of Eastern Europe than a philosopher if you want to understand this evil.

Yet Snyder's account presupposes or implies the macroscopic and perhaps even the philosophical. Beyond the comparison of imperialism and occupation—itself necessarily broad, and, anyway, revealing dissimilarities as often as commonalities—Snyder's accumulation of facts may not permit any broad new explanation of political murder. "Hitler and Stalin rose to power in Berlin and Moscow, but their visions of transformation concerned above all the land between," Snyder notes. True enough, but if Hitler and Stalin remain the prime movers, then explaining what happened in these bloody colonies still ultimately leads back to the totalitarian metropole. In the end Snyder is a historian of totalitarianism who skirts offering a theory of it.

Even within the bloodlands, the variety of ways of explaining death stands out as the main conclusion of Snyder's project. In an unusual "abstract" he has appended to his narrative, Snyder permits himself to use the sort of big words that are absent in the text and on which explanation often depends. Sometimes, he says, the area was the scene of common projects by superficially opposed parties, like the "de-Enlightenment" visited on Poland after 1939 and the "belligerent

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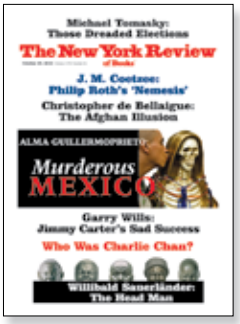

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complicity" that followed, in which many civilians died as armies clashed for what they thought were alternative ideological visions. Other times, however, the forms of death in the bloodlands were strictly different. The Soviets in the '30s sought the internal colonial "modernization" of Ukraine and elsewhere, in which kulaks were so many eggs necessary for the omelet. The Nazis in the '40s, by contrast, wanted a "colonial demodernization" that would lead to an agrarian paradise. The Soviets starved the countryside for the sake of the towns, whereas the Nazis aimed to destroy the urban resistance to realize a peasant utopia. Ultimately, Jews died as part of that latter vision. But then, at the level of explanation, there is no clear answer to what united the bloodlands except that they encompassed a region where totalitarians clashed and people died. Snyder is right to refer to the bloodlands in the plural.

When he turns to his conclusion, Snyder comes near to conceding that his study is therefore preliminary, and more corrective than it is constructive. It lays the foundation for some grand new explanation rather than providing one itself. Snyder is particularly hard-hitting about widespread accounts that attempt to extrapolate from the concentration camps of the west or even of Auschwitz in the east the inner logic of the Nazi regime or of totalitarianism as a whole. More generally, Snyder's book is an unanswerable criticism of a common intellectual syndrome in which a desire for majestic explanation proceeds without regard for the fine-grained details of what transpired. "For the time being," Snyder warns, "Europe's epoch of mass killing is overtheorized and misunderstood."

Four pages later, however, Snyder notes the insufficiency of facts and the necessity of theory. "The important question is: how could (how can) so many lives be brought to a violent end?" Overtheorizing is not the problem; mistaken theorizing is, at least in the long run. Repeating his findings about empire, reoccupation and collaboration, Snyder, however, finally turns mostly to wise reflections on memory and current European identity. And he concludes with the antitotalitarian humanist's interest in individuals, leaving aside for the future the search for explanation.

The "bloodlands" in which political murder took place is a historical reality but also a historian's construction. It is a prism through which to view a refractory landscape—in Snyder's case a literal one—in order to understand it better. Constructions help see things in relation to others, but always on pain of exclusion. As one chooses one's insight, one chooses one's blindness.

Of course, like genocide, "the Holocaust" is also a construct devised to make sense of the past. It came into widespread circulation as late as the '70s, disengaging the spectacular killing of Jews from the wartime scene and distinguishing their destruction from the suffering of "humanity" that ideologies like antifascism presented as the truth of the twentieth century. Different constructions of the Holocaust continue to vie for supremacy even today; a new book by Dan Stone, *Histories of the Holocaust*, provides a state-of-the-art analysis of the different current approaches. So the real question is how to compare the rival constructions and use the comparison to see what is valuable and problematic about each one.

Snyder spends more time minimizing Auschwitz than acknowledging its significance.

Snyder doesn't note the stress that his treatment of partisans places on the notion of "civilian atrocity." He shows vividly that in and around Minsk, and in the horrific occupation of Warsaw, Jews and others were real (not imagined) insurgents, and the Nazis responded in classically brutal fashion. Those Jews and other Belarussians and Poles were not "civilians," and their very prominence unsettles the framework in which civilian depredations are the focus. For that matter, Snyder doesn't pause to defend his premise that noncombatant depredations should be isolated, historically and morally, from the legitimate violence of warfare. Despite the staggering tote board of death Snyder erects, most of the blood spilled during World War II in these bloodlands came from soldiers' bodies. Yet the war is present in his history of them only as context for the death of civilians (or of those Soviet POWs, whose killing is illegitimate according to the law of armed conflict). Focusing on so-called political murder—as if war were not political—makes sense given the conventional assumption that when soldiers die it is simply a part of the cost of states' doing business, whereas civilian atrocity falls into a different category. But a dead body is a dead body, and if geography is to provide the framework it is hard to understand why these hecatombs of young men don't count too.

Similarly, Snyder's worry that Auschwitz gets too much press compared with the Aktion Reinhard camps like Treblinka is persuasive, but only up to a point, and it may not justify the relegation of the vast Auschwitz complex to a kind of afterthought on the grounds that it does not snugly fit the geographical framework. Situated on the western fringes of the bloodlands, on territory the Soviets never touched until they liberated it, Auschwitz faced not only west but south, toward the Hungarian Jews who would die there en masse in 1944, with no experience of Soviet occupation. In a somewhat perfunctory three pages on the site, Snyder spends more time minimizing it—relatively few Polish Jews died there, lots of others survived—than acknowledging its climactic significance, beyond any qualifications and rectifications.

Observing that 90 percent of the fatalities in the bloodlands had occurred before Birkenau came online in the spring of 1943, Snyder beautifully calls Auschwitz "the coda to the death fugue." But for a historian who so frequently cites facts and figures as dispositive, it still matters that more Jews died in Auschwitz—about a million—than in any other camp. And much more important, Auschwitz, more than any other site, revealed the continental scope of Hitler's hatred of Jews, which far transcended the bloodlands even if the suffering there was worse, both relatively and absolutely. In this sense, Auschwitz marks the limits of Snyder's revisionism, for choosing Auschwitz as a synecdoche of the whole Holocaust is far less an error than making the Gulag the symbol of Stalinist crime.

Ultimately, Snyder's main achievement is his juxtaposition of two homicidal regimes to make a point so well as to make it unanswerable, when not long ago it still elicited howls of outrage for trivializing the unique fate or special honor of particular victims. "Attention to any single persecuted group," as Snyder says, "will fail as an account of what happened in Europe between 1933 and 1945." This does not mean that connections among the various spasms of killing can be easily established; and noting their geographical proximity, as Snyder does, provides a series of local insights that may not add up to a comprehensive explanation. Still, by any measure *Bloodlands* is a remarkable, even triumphant accomplishment. ■

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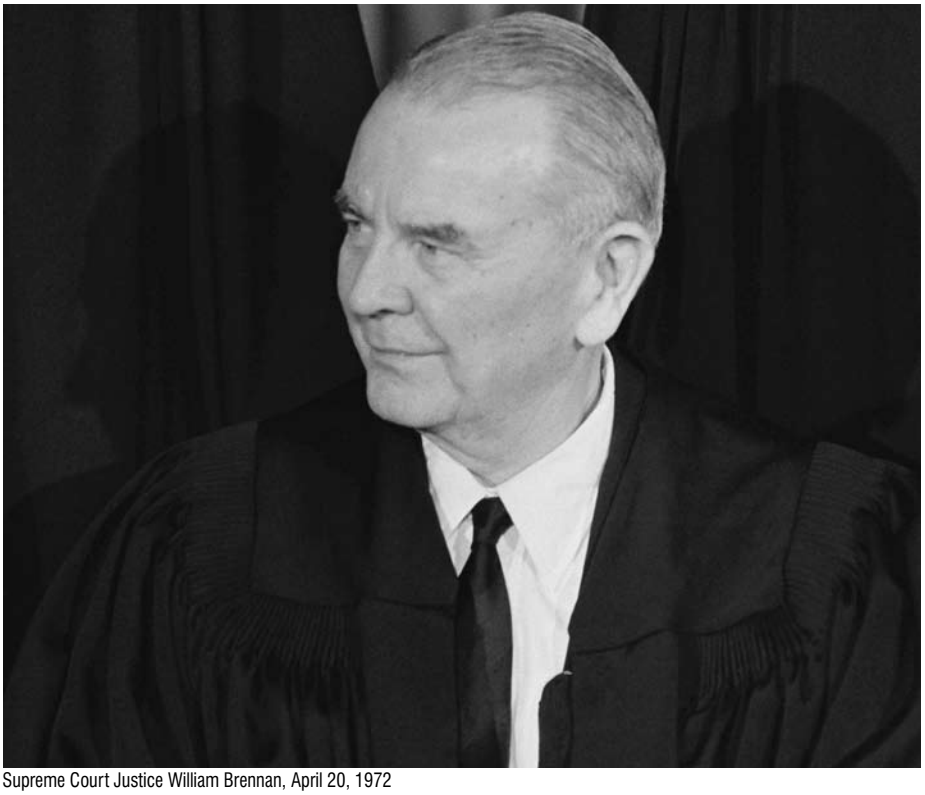
Without Artifice

by MICHAEL O'DONNELL

William Brennan, one of the great Supreme Court justices of the twentieth century, did not attract attention. A 1966 cover story on the Warren Court in the *New York Times Magazine* failed to mention him. He sat several rows behind President Johnson at Martin Luther King's funeral, but his presence—unlike that of several of his flashier colleagues—went unremarked by the press. Once, he attended a bar association meeting in Pittsburgh and practically had to jump out of the way of lawyers seeking autographs from the actor who played Perry Mason on television. An article on the event in the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette* reported that "Mr. Justice Brennan came unheralded. He left unfollowed."

Nonsense: every justice followed Brennan. If Johnson was master of the Senate, Brennan was king of the Court. Installed by President Eisenhower through a recess appointment, he served from 1956 to 1990. During the 1962–63 term at the height of the Warren years, he angled himself into the majority in nearly every case. He made a career of approaching his colleagues with a "Hiya, pal," taking their elbow and seeing what he could do to get them to join his opinion. You don't like the section on damages? Consider it cut. You think Hugo Black and William Douglas (the two justices to the left of Brennan) are going too far? I'll rein them in. There were frequently one or two justices—more on the Rehnquist Court—he failed to corral, but to those without dogmas fixed like bayonets he could be awfully persuasive. At the beginning of each term, he welcomed his new law clerks by opening his hand and showing them the most important thing they needed to know about the job: five fingers, a majority. With it, he told them, you can do anything around here.

The wildly inaccurate—and, to an extent, self-cultivated—view of Brennan as a cipher persisted until the publication of *The Brethren* (1979), by Bob Woodward and Scott Armstrong, and *Super Chief* (1983), by Bernard Schwartz. *The Brethren* was a gossipy, melodramatic account of the Court based on interviews with law clerks and some justices. Brennan called it a "Goddamn shit sheet" and emphatically denied having fed information to the authors, although his clerks were less discreet. (Justices Harry Blackmun, Lewis Powell and Potter Stewart secretly sat for interviews.) *Super Chief* was an academic biography of Earl Warren that, unbeknown to most, relied on Brennan's "term histories"—informal write-ups of the details of each case, including who switched votes and who slung mud. Both books revealed that Brennan was something of a man behind the curtain. The reassessment continued in the 1980s, in law review articles and in an essay in *The Nation* by law professor Stephen Gillers, who argued of Brennan, "It is increasingly clear that he deserves much of the credit for fashioning the legal theories that could support the progressive decisions of the last quarter-century, and for then persuading a majority of his colleagues to accept them." Thirteen years after his death, Brennan is now widely regarded as a figure of tremendous consequence, not merely as a justice but as a key participant in the civil rights and women's rights movements, and the criminal law revolution that helped bring Richard Nixon to power. Conservative jurists like Richard Posner and Antonin Scalia readily acknowledge his impact (Scalia called Brennan "probably the most influential justice of the century"). Seth Stern and Stephen Wermiel, the authors of an indispensable new biography, *Justice Brennan: Liberal Champion*, call Brennan "the most forceful and effective liberal ever to serve on the Court."



JOHN ROUS

Supreme Court Justice William Brennan, April 20, 1972

Justice Brennan
Liberal Champion.
By Seth Stern and Stephen Wermiel.
Houghton Mifflin Harcourt. 674 pp. $35.

Superlatives like these are unquantifiable and a little silly, but in this case they serve a welcome proselytizing function. Lawyers and law professors view Brennan as one of the giants of American jurisprudence, but even today few outside the profession seem to know who he was. Although he shaped many of the major decisions of the Court, his name did not always grace the opinions. He advanced the legal theory of privacy in *Griswold v. Connecticut* (1965), which held that states may not ban the use of contraceptives, but Justice Douglas was the opinion's author. He whispered into the ear of Chief Justice Warren in several of the major criminal procedure cases of the 1960s, like *Miranda v. Arizona* (1966),

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requiring the familiar warnings to criminal suspects, and *Terry v. Ohio* (1968), delimiting police stops and searches, but did not write the opinions. (Stern and Wermiel reveal, however, that he ghostwrote *Terry*.) When Justice Blackmun emerged as a leader in the Court's abortion jurisprudence, Brennan was happy to avoid the limelight, which for a liberal justice can become a harsh and dangerous glare. Blackmun, who wrote the Court's opinion in *Roe v. Wade* (1973), received more than his share of death threats, although Brennan was not overlooked.

Brennan's obscurity also owes something to his personality. He was not a grandiose striker of poses like Warren Burger or Anthony Kennedy, a brilliant polemicist like Scalia or Black, or a freewheeling nut like Douglas. Nor was he the face of the Court. During the 1950s and '60s, Earl Warren deliberately assumed that role, lending the Court's major decisions—especially *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954)—the dignity and gravity commanded by the office of chief justice. Brennan was less imposing. A diminutive first-generation Irish-American whose father was a city commissioner in New Jersey, Brennan "struck almost everyone who met him as completely unassuming." Stern and Wermiel write that he "took a certain puckish delight in strolling the sidewalks around the Court and innocently asking tourists what they thought went on inside its walls." He was gregarious and funny, warm to Court staff and a paterfamilias to his clerks, even if he remained guarded about his life. He linked arms with colleagues in the hallway and always tried to leave a room having made a friend rather than an enemy.

Brennan's opinions do not sing. He was no Oliver Wendell Holmes, whose concise and lucid decisions distilled tough legal and philosophical problems into luminous phrases. One of the chief criticisms of Brennan's opinions is that elegance and even clarity were frequently sacrificed to the need to accommodate colleagues' concerns in order to secure their votes. There is some truth to this, although it could also be said that, unlike Holmes, Brennan was a lawyer's judge rather than a judge's judge: instead of working from some abstract philosophy, he remained nimble, ready to compromise, eager to win. Five was the most important number, but six was even better, and seven called for cigars. In an era when unanimous decisions were still possible in controversial cases, Brennan preferred making incremental steps with a strong majority to eking out a righteous 5-4 thumb-noser.

He brought all his powers to bear in *Baker v. Carr* (1962), one of his major triumphs. In that case the Court for the first time asserted jurisdiction over claims that the unequal size of legislative districts—one legislator for a tiny rural district, and one for a huge urban district—violated the Equal Protection clause. Brennan strove mightily to persuade Justice Stewart, a centrist, to be his fifth vote. After compromising extensively and winning his man, Brennan unexpectedly got a sixth vote from Justice Tom Clark, who emerged willing to go even further in resolving the case. Clark would not merely assert the Court's jurisdiction over reapportionment cases generally but would actually rule that the districting scheme in the present case was unconstitutional. Stewart refused to take that additional step, and Brennan found himself in the position—not for the only time—of having to hold together a coalition that threatened to unravel at both ends. Rather than sacrifice Stewart's vote, Brennan kept the opinion narrow for a 6-2 victory. (One justice recused himself.) Having laid the groundwork that courts could hear reapportionment cases, Brennan waited for later opportunities to establish the substantive principle that the Equal Protection Clause requires legislative districts that produce "one person, one vote." Warren called *Baker* the most important case of his tenure on the Court.

> Unlike Oliver Wendell Holmes, Brennan was a lawyer's judge rather than a judge's judge.

The ten pages of *Justice Brennan: Liberal Champion* devoted to recounting Brennan's maneuverings in *Baker v. Carr* are riveting. So are similar passages on Brennan's other big wins, including *Cooper v. Aaron* (1958), enforcing desegregation in Little Rock; *New York Times v. Sullivan* (1964), holding that the First Amendment barred Southern authorities from suing newspapers or civil rights activists for libel; and *Goldberg v. Kelly* (1970), preventing officials from summarily cutting off welfare benefits. These passages are just a few of the fruits of an extraordinary collaboration: Brennan "authorized" Stern and Wermiel's book in 1986, four years before retiring. He opened his files completely to Wermiel, the former Supreme Court reporter for the *Wall Street Journal*; allowed him to observe conferences between justice and clerks; and sat for sixty hours of interviews. (Stern is a reporter for *Congressional Quarterly*.) The authors also interviewed other justices and 100 of Brennan's 108 former law clerks. The inside flap of the book proudly proclaims, "No biographer has enjoyed this kind of access to a Supreme Court justice," and, for once, the jacket copy seems plausibly modest.

The price for such cooperation is often a fawning portrait, but that is certainly not the case here. *Justice Brennan: Liberal Champion* is not on the whole a negative assessment, but Stern and Wermiel are plentifully critical of Brennan—too harshly in places. For instance, they chide him for inviting state courts to make up for the Supreme Court's conservatism in the 1970s and '80s by interpreting their state constitutions expansively. They also think little of his conception of the "living Constitution," even though they are wrong to suppose that a static document that does not respond to society's evolving needs can survive for another dozen generations. Yet they find much to admire as well, and prompt a generous reexamination of the "activist" label commonly associated with Brennan—a label he did not embrace but did not completely eschew, either. This is not the first biography of the justice, but it is the first comprehensive study. The authors proportion it nicely, interweaving biographical information, case histories (but not a numbing litany of them) and details of Brennan's tactical moves into an enjoyable narrative. The book is a major contribution to the history of the Supreme Court.

The first point to note about *Justice Brennan: Liberal Champion* is its rich but discriminating level of detail about Brennan's life on the Court. It has long been known that he assiduously courted his colleagues' votes, but who knew that he was not above lobbying their law clerks directly? Brennan and Warren met privately each week before the justices' formal conference at which cases were discussed and opinions assigned; Warren frequently solicited Brennan's advice on which justice should take which case. We learn that Justice William Rehnquist casually referred to noncitizen children as "wetbacks," upsetting his colleagues. (This from the man who as a law clerk in 1952 recommended reaffirming *Plessy v. Ferguson*'s separate but equal doctrine; he claimed before the Senate Judiciary Committee merely to have been channeling the justice's views.) Additional evidence that Justice Felix Frankfurter was an insufferable and tactless pedant is marshaled in abundance; Justice Douglas liked to call him "little bastard," and Brennan referred to the equally

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conservative but much cooler Justice John Marshall Harlan II as "Frankfurter without mustard." Chief Justice Burger, to whom history has been not at all kind, emerges yet again as a boob and a bore.

One area where the book could stand more anecdotal texture is its portrayal of Brennan's storied friendship with Justice Thurgood Marshall. The two frequently voted together, and became heroes on the left by dissenting in lockstep whenever the Court refused to stop an execution; an iconic photo shows them walking away from the camera down the hallways of justice. It has been widely reported that once he joined the Court, Marshall, a legend for arguing *Brown* and many other cases on behalf of the NAACP, sloughed off work and grew resigned after years in dissent, letting down many friends and fans. There are hints that Brennan was among them, but he seems to have been reticent with his chroniclers on the issue—as he was with other painful chapters in his personal relations. A footnote states that Brennan asked Wermiel "to use 'great discretion' when addressing his disappointment about Marshall. 'It could be horribly misunderstood.'" It appears less that the authors complied with this request than that Brennan offered them little material to work with, other than a general sense of sadness and frustration about Marshall's long decline.

The book's most remarkable disclosures provide new detail about Brennan's refusal to hire female law clerks. Like most justices, Brennan relied on friends in the academy and on the federal appeals courts to recommend recent law school graduates to clerk in his chambers. Yet in 1970, when Stephen Barnett, a former clerk turned professor at the University of California, Berkeley, called Brennan to recommend one of the top students in the class, Alison Grey, Brennan balked. "Send me someone else," he said, "making it perfectly clear," according to Stern and Wermiel, "that he meant a male clerk." Justices Douglas, Black and Abe Fortas had all hired women by that time, but it was a step Brennan would not take. Three years later, when Barnett again recommended a woman—the future federal judge Marsha Berzon—Brennan again demurred. To his great credit, Barnett then wrote Brennan a respectful but outraged letter, which Stern and Wermiel quote at length:

> Mr. Justice, I don't believe you realize how serious this matter is. For one thing—looking only at the pragmatic side—I am very much afraid that the subject will come out in the open and embarrass or threaten you. Your blanket refusal to accept a woman clerk is not just "sexist," and not just contrary to government policy; it seems to me that it is literally unconstitutional.... I can't believe you would want your daughter or granddaughter, say...to be denied an opportunity to clerk for the Supreme Court—and all the subsequent opportunities that flow from that—because the Justice in question simply refused to hire a woman. With all the admiration I have for you and what you stand for, I just cannot believe that, on reflection, you will continue a policy that is both unconstitutional and simply wrong, and is so much at odds with your great principles.

After receiving the letter, Brennan called Barnett and admitted his mistake. "Steve," he said, "you must win all your cases." Brennan hired Berzon as his first female law clerk for the 1974–75 term, and the relationship was mutually agreeable, with Berzon professing to be charmed by Brennan's "generational chivalry." Stern and Wermiel compliment Brennan for recognizing his error rather than responding defensively. Nevertheless, he waited seven years before hiring another female clerk. Casting his lot with poor company indeed, Brennan echoed Chief Justice Burger, who was known to grouse that if a woman were ever appointed to the Court, he would have to resign. (Neither justice did so when Sandra Day O'Connor joined the Court in 1981, but Brennan's relations with her—perhaps for political reasons—were never warm.)

Brennan explained privately that "he worried about having to watch what he said if a woman clerk worked in his chambers. He did not feel he could have the same sort of relaxed rapport with a female clerk or colleague." He liked to swear and tell crass jokes, and tended to be solicitous and paternalistic toward female attorneys arguing before the Court. Yet he never connected these prejudices to the sex discrimination cases he heard and pushed toward liberal outcomes during the same years. In many of those cases, future justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg argued on behalf of the ACLU and Brennan worked the votes—a kind of dance from across the bench. In an interview with Stern and Wermiel, Ginsburg refused to hold Brennan's hiring practice against him. "He was a man brought up in a certain age," she said. Focusing more on his words than his actions, she called him

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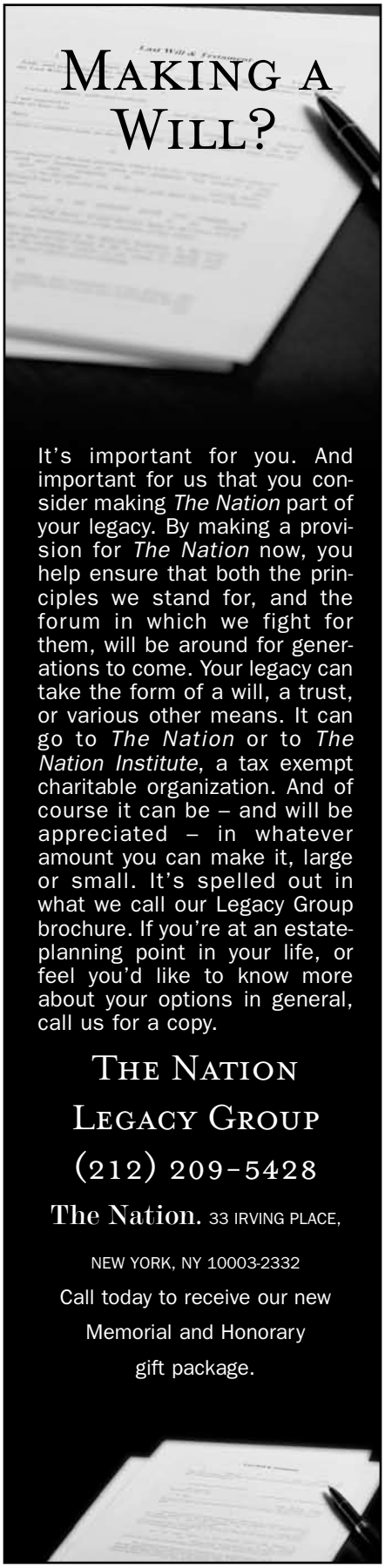
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her hero and sent him a copy of one of her own gender-discrimination opinions in 1996, with the warm note, "Dear Bill, See how the light you shed has spread!"

This new evidence of Brennan's sexism is distressing for what it says about the legal profession and one of its great progressives. Stern and Wermiel pivot on these revelations to make the most interesting and provocative point in *Justice Brennan: Liberal Champion*—one they would have done well to develop even further. They contend that Brennan's treatment of women was one of many areas where his personal beliefs and practices were far more conservative than his rulings, and suggest that this calls for a recalibration of the "judicial activist" label that seems to follow every mention of his name. He was the Court's great champion of racial equality, yet he employed African-American servants and hired only one black clerk, in 1990 (the year before Clarence Thomas replaced Marshall on the Court). He consistently voted to separate church from state, even though he vainly sought approval from his own Catholic church for most of his career. In *New York Times v. Sullivan*, Brennan wrote "one of the strongest defenses of freedom of speech ever by the Court," yet journalists so infuriated him that he seems to have begun swearing whenever his biographers mentioned the press. And while he provided a strong vote to protect a woman's right to choose, he told Wermiel, "I wouldn't under any circumstances condone an abortion in my private life."

These paradoxes must be treated cautiously. It would be facile to slap them onto the table as evidence that Brennan was some sort of judicial minimalist. He was an activist, and thank God, too, or we'd be living in Robert Bork's America, segregated lunch counters and all. Wisely, Stern and Wermiel do not question that ultimate conclusion, but their reporting does broaden our understanding of a term bandied about these days with all the care of a drunken frat boy throwing darts. After all, if an activist is a jurist who substitutes his judgment for that of elected officials, then Scalia, Thomas and Rehnquist are guilty too. Overruling legislatures is a necessary if prickly and little-understood feature of judicial review, which has been at the heart of American government since *Marbury v. Madison* in 1803. But when conservative justices these days strike down gun control laws, affirmative action plans or campaign finance rules, they do so while professing to abhor judicial power, hiding behind neutral-sounding methods of interpretation like textualism (for statutes) and originalism (for the Constitution). These doctrines satisfy Republican electioneers and many voters, but they collapse as value-laden pretenses upon any serious inspection. Every justice is involved in a fundamentally political enterprise, but these days it is only the conservatives who feel a need to wear masks to the ball—and you should never dance with a partner who can't look you in the eye. Brennan's watchword was human dignity, and to protect it he interpreted individual rights expansively. To his credit, he did so without artifice.

But even if Brennan believed in an assertive judiciary, Stern and Wermiel show that he did not simply use the Constitution to enact his own politics as law. He was no radical, like Douglas or Black. His biography reveals a moderately liberal man captured by the conventions and prejudices of his times. His disappointing treatment of female clerkship applicants shows that rather than writing his preferences into the Constitution, he was interpreting the Constitution as he understood it. He realized that, in our country's greatest aspirations, "equal protection of the laws" means more than segregated restrooms and different pay scales for women, even if the implications of those judgments made him personally uncomfortable—or, in the case of hiring women, defiant.

Brennan's biggest weakness was, however, linked to his activism. He relied too heavily on persuasion and the cultivation of allies instead of doctrinal consistency and soundness. More than one academic accused him of mis-citing precedents in order to reach a result. That is putting things too strongly, but it is true that Brennan's style—hard on votes, loose on details—necessarily rendered many of his achievements ephemeral. He was like a brilliant architect who ordered discount mortar: once he no longer had the numbers to hold his great structures together, some began to collapse, especially in the areas of criminal procedure and affirmative action. In the 1970s and '80s, Brennan increasingly gave in to anger and dissented bitterly when this happened—in the process, alienating new colleagues like Kennedy and O'Connor whom he might otherwise have collected. But even toward the end of his tenure he would occasionally emerge, twinkle-eyed, with a surprise victory, and there would be doughnuts the next morning. If he were serving today, he would find his match in the cagey young chief justice, all smiles and reasonableness until he begins blasting the law back to the stone age. But Brennan would have swung him, at least in a case or two. The country would have been the better for it. ■

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The Merry-Go-Round

by DIANE SIMON

You'll be forgiven if you only pretend to know who Jack Anderson was. If you have a vague notion of a jowly reporter in baggy pants, well, you are probably ahead of the pack. Anderson was once read and revered by millions—in its heyday, his "Washington Merry-Go-Round" column ran in almost a thousand papers—but by the time Anderson retired in 2004, a year before he died, he was long past his days as a household name. Indeed, less than a decade after he'd won a Pulitzer Prize for his exposure of Nixon's secret favoring of Pakistan during the India-Pakistan war of 1971, Anderson was ranked last for "accuracy and integrity" in a survey rating American columnists. By the mid-'90s, he'd lost his spot in the *Washington Post* and had slid from *Good Morning America* to *Inside Edition*. When Anderson finally pulled out of a documentary on the aftermath of the *Exxon Valdez* spill—a film that was to be partially funded by Exxon—the conflict of interest probably surprised only a few. At the turn of the twenty-first century, Jack Anderson was no longer a muckraking hero; he was a blustering pundit playing a caricature of himself on TV.

In retrospect, it's easy to see that the germ of Anderson's deterioration had been there all along. Working alongside Drew Pearson, the originator of the "Merry-Go-Round," Anderson had already proven to be relentless, fearless and more than a little ruthless by the time he inherited the column in 1969. Eleven years earlier, he'd broken the news that Eisenhower's chief of staff, Sherman Adams, had accepted expensive gifts from Bernard Goldfine, a businessman then under investigation by the Federal Trade Commission. But soon after, Anderson was caught using an alias, trying to bug Goldfine's room at a Washington hotel. Though embarrassed, and nearly indicted, Anderson later claimed his highly publicized mistake worked in his favor by assuring readers he was providing what he jovially called "keyhole evidence."

With glee, Anderson and Pearson dropped a bomb into the presidential campaign of 1960. Just two weeks before the election, their column exposed Howard Hughes's $205,000 loan to Nixon's brother Don. Their sources—stolen documents that had been an expensive purchase made by Kennedy aides—were left untouched by several more cautious journalists before they made it into the "Merry-Go-Round." With this scoop, a modus operandi was set: using unsavory methods and propelled by questionable motives, Anderson would, for the next fifteen years, bark, growl and bite at the Nixon administration. For a pit bull like Anderson, Nixon was a juicy bone.

Diane Simon has worked for 60 Minutes, CNBC, and CBS News.

Poisoning the Press
Richard Nixon, Jack Anderson, and the Rise of Washington's Scandal Culture.
By Mark Feldstein.
Farrar, Straus and Giroux. 461 pp. $30.

The two shared more than mutual animosity. Nixon and Anderson were both born in California, the sons of distant, religious fathers. Both moved to Washington in 1947. Both were charismatic, vociferously righteous and motivated by vendetta; and each used every dirty trick available to discredit the other. The struggle between them culminated in a Pulitzer for Anderson and, in the estimation of Mark Feldstein, author of *Poisoning the Press*, led Nixon straight to the doors of the Watergate building.

In Feldstein's telling, the war between the Nixon White House and the "Merry-Go-Round" was part sophisticated public relations maneuvering, part frat house antic. Both Anderson and Nixon used the shadow of homosexuality to threaten, pressure and taint their enemies. When Nixon's staff identified the anonymous source of Anderson's classified information, Nixon directed investigators to find out if Anonymous and Anderson were "sexual up the ass." In an effort to "get" Herbert Hoover, Anderson and his "legmen" (no word of "leg women") followed the FBI chief to lunch with his handsome young deputy, Clyde Tolson. They staked out his home and went through his garbage. Unable to find direct evidence of an affair, Anderson made do with innuendo, reporting to readers that Hoover took heartburn medication and had secretly sought psychiatric help, and that he and Tolson, "both bachelors," had taken an expensive vacation together.

The struggle between Nixon and his nemesis reached a climax in the early '70s, in two separate, damaging leaks. The first hit in December 1971, in the wake of the war between India and Pakistan. Charles Radford, a Navy stenographer who was drafted by the Pentagon to spy on the White House, slipped his cache of stolen documents directly to Anderson, meeting him in an alley in downtown Washington. These were the "Anderson Papers," a series of highly sensitive memos revealing the president's biased but decisive opinions on delicate matters of diplomacy. In contrast to the neutral stance publicly adopted by the administration and supported by Congress, the notes Anderson obtained revealed presidential directives that directly favored Pakistan at India's expense. "Anderson, who is a skunk, has become a hero," lamented Henry Kissinger to his boss.

Nixon and Kissinger's credibility was damaged by the leaks, but Anderson's was restored: this was his Pulitzer moment, and he followed it with another success. Yet again, a shocking document came his way—but this time it came anonymously and in the mail. It was a copy of a memo from ITT lobbyist Dita Beard trumpeting that ITT's $400,000 contribution to the Republican National Convention had indeed worked its intended magic. The Justice Department would settle anti-trust litigation in ITT's favor, and the company would be able to proceed with its purchase of Hartford Fire Insurance.

A scandal exploded, putting Anderson on the cover of *Time* and leaving a paranoid Nixon huddled with his aides, hoping there was evidence somewhere that Anderson's co-reporter (Brit Hume, as it turns out) was gay. "Attack the goddamn media!" Nixon railed. "The press corps is anti-us." Unable to substantiate their rumor that Hume was gay, the administration focused on Beard, implying that she and Anderson had concocted the memo together and that their conspiracy was an effect of a lesbian affair Beard was allegedly having with Anderson's secretary, Opal Ginn. Enjoying his moment in the sun, Anderson the teetotaling Mormon was as salty as Nixon the homophobic Quaker, calling the president a "dogpatch style politician, who always aims his knee at the groin."

Ironically, despite all the leaked memos and vituperative bluster, it was not Anderson who chased Nixon out of office. Anderson's only significant Watergate scoop came from a random source who had combed through the trash and walked into Anderson's office with a handful of stenographic carbons from the sealed Watergate grand jury testimony. In April 1973 Ginn hung the sheets

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on a lampshade and set to work retyping nearly 500 pages of transcripts. Anderson published page after page until the Justice Department persuaded him to stop. As the Watergate investigations widened, though, his competitors overtook him. Feldstein blames the format of Anderson's column—a four-day lag meant that he couldn't keep up on fast-breaking competitive stories. Those delays "effectively killed Anderson's scoops," he writes, and ultimately, "Watergate destroyed Anderson's muckraking monopoly in Washington."

Feldstein is really being kind. A syndicated column might have been limiting on a competitive story, but when it came to breaking stories Anderson was his own worst enemy. The summer after the Watergate break-in, Anderson took on George McGovern's vice presidential pick, Senator Thomas Eagleton, claiming to have "photostats" of Eagleton's multiple arrests for "drunken and reckless" driving. It was a lie he compounded day after day until he was forced to apologize to Eagleton on national television. Having become front-page news, Anderson was no longer able to hide his wilder accusations among the comic strips (where his column often ran). His old habit of relying on sensational innuendo now earned him more scrutiny than his reporting methods could support. Time and again, he made salacious and egregious claims against his enemies (or those he decided to "get") that damaged his reputation far more than those of his targets. And, Feldstein notes, Anderson's friendships were equally destructive: his close relationship with Ronald Reagan, for instance, led him to ignore what he knew of the Iran/Contra deals. In the early '90s the *Washington Post* stopped running the "Merry-Go-Round."

Like Brit Hume and Howard Kurtz, Feldstein worked briefly under Jack Anderson as an intern before going on to become a network correspondent and lately a professor at George Washington University. That might be one of the reasons his story, for all its research and punch, is tinged with a romantic melancholy. At times, Feldstein paints a portrait of Anderson that strains against the facts. He explains away Anderson's pocketing of money from the legislators he covered by referring to the difficulty of feeding nine children, and at one point he even applauds Anderson for being "willing to report about homosexuality" instead of taking him to task for launching the same kind of sexual witch hunt that excited Hoover and Nixon.

Indeed, Feldstein attributes the currently "poisoned press" of his title mainly to the "dirty tricks" and vengeful paranoia of the Nixon administration, which paved the way for what Lanny Davis calls "gotcha politics." But to me, Anderson seems a direct progenitor of our contemporary pundits, the ancestral patriarch of "gotcha." He frequently reached out to his ideal reader—a haloed "Kansas City Milkman"—and perfected a tone of conspiracy and outrage that allied him with the milkman against the Washington elite he had promised to pillory. When facts were scarce, he was happy to use an explosive mixture of innuendo and anger to make his point, even volunteering to testify at Senate hearings to make sure no one missed it.

It seems that every age must decry the new low to which its reporters have sunk.

Though the book recounts Anderson's breaches of journalistic ethics, and the ways he became a story unto himself, Feldstein characterizes them as personal peccadilloes, or a willingness to sacrifice ideals for the greater good. To a gripping, well-told narrative history Feldstein has appended a jeremiad about the lost days of investigative journalism: once there was a noble muckraker named Jack Anderson, who tirelessly fought the evil administration of Richard Nixon, and now, well, there's nobody. The Nixon administration's manipulative media strategies have been honed to perfection by his successors, and all that's left of a once hearty journalistic landscape is a capital awash in "media-driven scandal mania." Instead of a reliable press corps devoted to public service, we have an "instantaneous cacophony of infotainment" abetted by attention-splintering media and government secrecy.

It's a weak argument, but Feldstein's is a common plaint. It seems that every age must decry the new low to which its reporters have sunk. Yet I wonder if our collective dream of the old days of "objective" (nonpartisan, unbiased, scandal-less) journalism isn't really a mirage. Partisan journalism, replete with innuendo and sexual scandal, is not just what we're left with after deregulation has made celebrities out of the loudest asses in the barn. Historically, it has been an essential engine of political discourse. It was, as even Feldstein notes, the lifeblood of the early Republic. When he was secretary of state, Thomas Jefferson used government funds to start up a newspaper sympathetic to his views. Back home, a Virginia paper dug into the third president's private life, noting, "It is well known that the man…keeps…as his concubine, one of his slaves. Her name is SALLY."

Like many who professionally take stock of our contemporary media, Feldstein laments journalism's "abdication of its watchdog role on issues of substance" like "accounting, banking, and investment fraud." But I am not sure we should be alarmed. Even at a time when the bean counters are tracking web hits, investigative and enterprise journalism live and flourish at a number of institutions, including the readily accessible *New York Times*. And the "cacophonous" explosion of new media has given an eager audience to the voices of gossipmongers and whistleblowers alike. Indeed, we might be in the midst of a golden age of public discourse. Think about it: every night our airwaves and computer screens are filled with people talking and writing passionately about politics, and millions of people are listening and reading!

Perhaps that is the real discomfort. Passion in the news makes certain people nervous—it seems undignified. We've mistakenly allied the ideal of journalism with loftier, "drier" topics, and an emotionless presentation. Compared with accounting fraud, "scandal mania" sounds naughty and frivolous. Feldstein has given his late, lamented watchdog a depressingly narrow purview, if he is to be, by definition, more interested in savings and loan fraud than "lower" or more titillating forms of misdeed. The truth is, matters of passion and state have never been mutually exclusive. And why shouldn't journalists have prejudices and emotions? I challenge anyone to find a more meaningful moment in broadcast history than the thirty seconds it took for Walter Cronkite to digest the news of President Kennedy's assassination and choke back tears on the air. Back in the early nineteenth century, there was no alternative model, no hazy memory of better days, to keep some hands clean. Everyone had a cause, and everyone got dirty. Say what you will about Jack Anderson, but he was a guy who wasn't afraid to take a stand in the muck. ■

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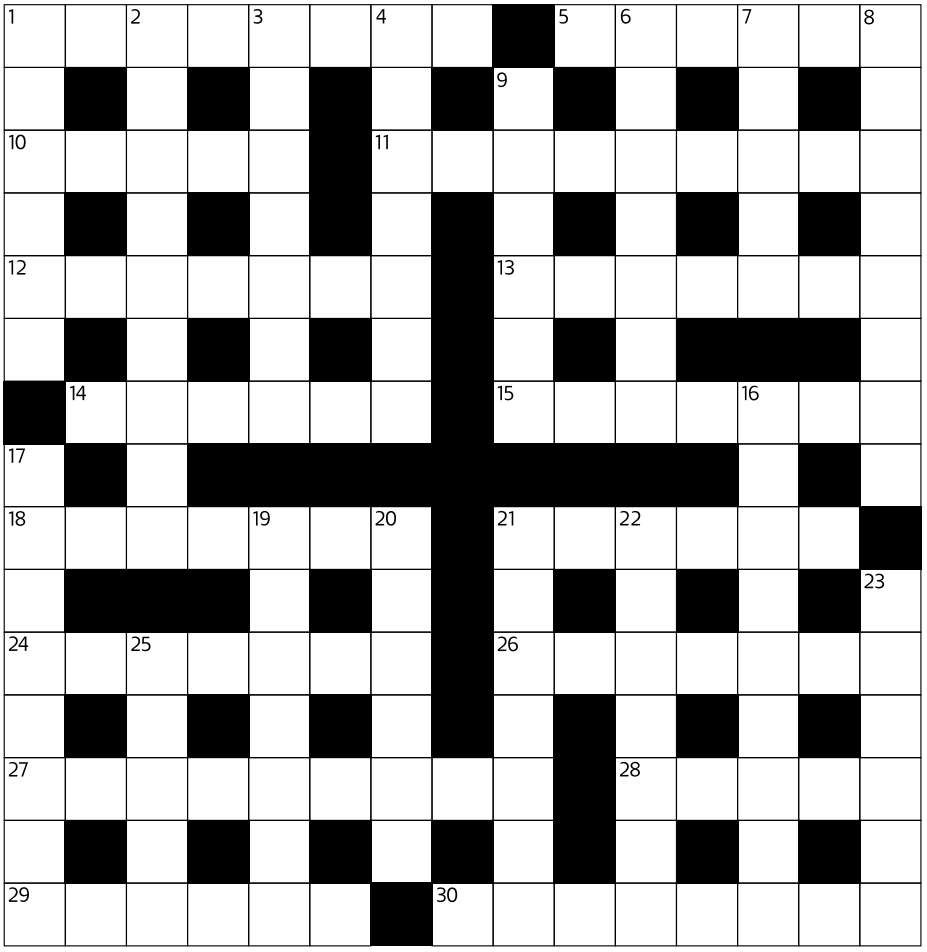
FRANK W. LEWIS



ACROSS

1 and **5** Where he sits to form his opinions might be easy, as well. (8,6)

10 A man no youngster has to bother, obviously. (5)

11 You'll have to fight to press for the business some dealers are in. (5,4)

12 Going for the title, perhaps? (7)

13 Put into operation at acute trouble. (7)

14 Straightforward conduct. (6)

15 Some signals might be called after them. (7)

18 If the pigskin gets dirty, do they use this, or would that be nonsense? (7)

21 Reputedly happy spirit brought forth by one? (6)

24 Where to find the point of etching to be à la mode. (2,5)

26 Led back with the sort of dude that's easily tricked. (7)

27 Changes the title, perhaps. (9)

28 See 7 down

29 The part of the skimobile that's used to travel on snow. (6)

30 Lies cold when taken apart, but ultimately comes together. (8)

DOWN

1 and **17** Her character emphasized the little grey cells. (6,8)

2 and **25** You might find one in a Chinese restaurant, though you might not want to meet one sailing. (3-6,5)

3 The diary he composed might typify somewhat dated entertainment. (7)

4 Such things can be seen to prove understanding. (7)

6 Said to be placed in the woodwind, perhaps. (7)

7 and **28** across You're on solid ground here. (5,5)

8 Possibly a plier as it once appeared. (8)

9 Henry V suggested going into it once more. (6)

16 With the umbrella, under Edwardian rules it should show what could be cleaned up. (9)

17 See 1 down

19 Flower arranging lays the total amount. (7)

20 Observed he precedes a misdeed? (6)

21 A rather retiring circle in California? (7)

22 The train was in *Patience*. (7)

23 Jane of Hull House. (6)

25 See 2

This puzzle originally appeared in the December 6, 1975, issue.

SOLUTION TO PUZZLE NO. 1609

A	S	A	G	E	N	E	R	A	L	■	R	U	L	E
C	■	N	■	A	■	A	■	L	■	U	■	N	■	L
T	R	I	G	G	E	R	■	A	R	M	B	A	N	D
S	■	M	■	L	■	M	■	C	■	B	■	I	■	E
■	B	A	R	E	B	A	C	K	■	R	I	D	E	R
O	■	L	■	■	■	R	■	■	■	E	■	E	■	B
F	I	S	T	S	■	K	N	O	W	L	E	D	G	E
V	■	■	■	T	■	E	■	V	■	L	■	■	■	R
I	N	A	H	U	D	D	L	E	■	A	U	G	U	R
O	■	N	■	D	■	■	■	R	■	■	■	E	■	Y
L	O	D	G	E	■	M	O	H	I	C	A	N	S	■
E	■	A	■	N	■	A	■	E	■	A	■	T	■	G
N	I	L	O	T	I	C	■	A	P	P	R	I	S	E
C	■	A	■	S	■	A	■	T	■	R	■	A	■	N
E	A	S	Y	■	C	O	N	S	C	I	E	N	C	E

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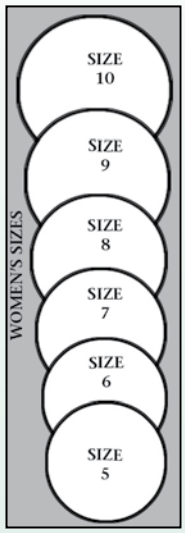

USING THE RING SIZE CHART
Place one of her rings on top of one of the circle diagrams. Her ring size is the circle that matches the inside diameter of the ring diagram. If her ring falls between sizes, order the next larger size.

Your satisfaction is 100% guaranteed. If for any reason you're not completely smitten with your Diamond*Aura*® ***Dearly Beloved Rings***, return the rings within 30 days for a full refund of your purchase price. But we're certain that whether you're popping the question for the first time or marking another marital milestone, this pair is sure to become a highlight of your "happily ever after."

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- .925 sterling silver setting

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